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# SUMMARY OF 1989 USDA DATA USERS MEETINGS



*Orlando, Florida  
March 1-2, 1989*

*Sacramento, California  
March 7-8, 1989*

*Portland, Oregon  
March 9, 1989*

*Lansing, Michigan  
March 14, 1989*

*Syracuse, New York  
March 15, 1989*

*Washington, D.C.  
March 16, 1989*

National Agricultural Statistics Service  
Agricultural Marketing Service  
Economic Research Service

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D.C.

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## FOREWORD

*This report summarizes discussion at six Data Users Meetings held in March 1989 to discuss USDA economic and statistical reports. Also included are written statements which were provided by meeting participants or by individuals who were unable to attend.*

*Listening meetings have been held nearly every year since 1978 by agencies under the Assistant Secretary for Economics. These meetings have identified a number of improvements which have been incorporated into the ongoing reports and research program.*

*The 1989 meetings focused on fruits, vegetables, other specialty commodities, and farm labor reports. The Agricultural Marketing Service joined the Economic Agencies in this year's meetings.*

*The material presented in this report is a summary of the major points presented at each session. No attempt was made to capture verbatim comments. All answers and subsequent discussion based on remarks by a particular speaker are shown by indentations.*



# DATA USERS MEETINGS

Orlando, Florida

March 1-2, 1989

## GENERAL SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

### **Charles Caudill - National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)**

Today is your day to tell us what you want to. Although we spent most of the day yesterday talking about what we call our specialty crops program of statistics, today you can talk about any part of our program you want to including our livestock and field crops data or any of the statistics that are listed in this catalog. Also, if you have comments on data dissemination, if you are EDI users and that's working well for you or if it's not working well we would like to know, because we can take that information back to the Department and see what we might do to improve it. Some of you mentioned yesterday you would like to see more data available on floppy disk. ERS has made a major advance in just the last year in getting a lot of their data bases available on that media, and we are working hard on it. We hope, in next year's catalog, to have a listing of data that's available on floppies, particularly our county estimates series. As Don mentioned yesterday, we would like to record what you have to say today. We will transcribe it and put it in a report for distribution, not only to everybody that attended here, but we have five other Data Users Meetings following this one. We will transcribe what those people say and try to get their comments back to the whole group across the country. If you don't want your comments recorded, we'll be glad to turn the tape off. When you start to speak, since we don't have name plates on the table, please tell us your name so we can attribute your comments correctly. We are prepared to stay here all day today. If we get all your comments and you say all you want to say by noontime, we will quit at that time. I know three people have to leave a bit early. Is there anybody else, other than those 3 that I have already identified, that has to leave early? You met Bob Robinson, the Associate Administrator for ERS, yesterday. Bob, do you have anything?

### **Bob Robinson - Economic Research Service (ERS)**

Just a couple comments. You got from Boyd Buxton yesterday, a bit about the kind of functional program areas that we have. But to underline one of them particularly, and they are all interrelated, the situation and outlook program on which he presented some of our procedural elements is a bread and butter program for the Agency. That is an old program. Basically it is for you, the client, and if you're not happy with it, we need to know about it. If you are happy with it or you think we need to make some changes or there are some things we need to do to make it better, let us know. That's the reason we asked to participate with Charlie in this particular conference, and it is important to us that we make our products accessible. The data that we have available, such as the additional information on the finders disk that was passed out yesterday and many of our other data products, are accessible to you. However, ultimately we want to make them as usable to you as we can. So don't be hesitant to let me know if there are things you think we need to do or look at. Thanks.

### **Charles Caudill - NASS**

Robert Keeny from AMS. Bob, do you have anything?



**Robert Keeny - AMS**

I just wanted to thank NASS and ERS for inviting us to this meeting. Yesterday, we did hear from John Toth on marketing orders and Bill Crocker on market news, and of course, we have some other programs too, such as inspection service programs and commodity purchase programs, which some of you are probably involved in and know about. I'd be happy to answer any questions on those and I have my two experts in the other two areas, so they can probably field some of your questions.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We do have some specialty agricultural commodities that we really didn't talk about yesterday and that's over in the livestock area. I doubt you will have much interest in those, although some of you will have an interest in aquaculture, which includes our Catfish reports. These consist of production surveys twice a year and a monthly slaughter report on catfish, and we are also doing a trout production survey once a year. We have an annual mink survey we do once a year. All of these we call specialty animal or livestock surveys. Occasionally, States will fund a horse or equine survey. New Jersey just did a major equine survey and a number of other States have surveys in the works. We don't have funds in our regular program so the equine industry has to come up with the money anytime we do a survey like that. Of course, I realize there are a number of specialty crops that are not in our program, and you may have something to say about those. I particularly want to hear about those that are in the program that we can discontinue, because we have to do something to save money; and it looks like money will be tighter as we go into the next year. I think our guests from Alabama are going to leave early, so Steve Guy and Jim Cravey, I don't know whether both of you want to say something or one of you is going to speak. We would like to hear from both of you if you have comments.

**Jim Cravey - Alabama Farmers Federation**

We appreciate you having this meeting and inviting us down. On catfish and aquaculture, we think that's one of the primary areas in Alabama where we can achieve agricultural growth. We are very interested in it, and we appreciate you moving forward in securing the statistical records that we think will help us. We have producers in Alabama that are opposed to this, some of our major producers are opposed to it. In our annual meeting and trade show last week, some of our producers wanted to take us to task on that. We've got a little selling job to do, and we'll take responsibility for working, maybe take lead responsibility for selling the importance of this survey. We have already worked with Duffy some on that. I have a question from yesterday when we were talking about imports into the country. We have a report here that shows the commodities imported, and catfish is a good one. Who puts together the information that shows total consumption where you add the imports and the production?

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

Our aquaculture program is a new program. We got our first funding for that last year at the request of the Catfish Producers in Mississippi, particularly. They went to Congress and got the money for us to do the surveys and for ERS to start a situation and outlook report, and I'm assuming, Bob, that the "Situation and Outlook" report will eventually combine catfish production and import data.

**Bob Robinson - ERS**

In fact, there are some of those estimates already available in the presentation that was made at this year's National Outlook Conference in December in Washington. Some of the early estimates were available. There is another aquaculture outlook report that will be coming out the last part of March. While I don't have in my mind the exact format of that report at the moment, I'm sure those kinds of data will be in there.



**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We do publish catfish imports in the monthly slaughter report along with our domestic slaughter of catfish. Those data are originally collected by the Commerce Department. I've been following for a couple of years, imports of catfish from Brazil and they have been growing. They're still at a low level but have been growing. I think if we have a market for that kind of imports coming in from Brazil, there is potential to increase production in this country. And it has increased tremendously over the past 5 years.

**Steve Guy - Alabama Farmers Federation**

As an organization, we started working on the catfish producers in 1974. We have most of those people identified, and this is an area small enough that we can get all the players together and hopefully build a real good relationship in Alabama and move ahead. I want to use this data on imports to show some of our producers what's coming in. The sad thing about it is that in Brazil and all across the world the U.S. is trying to help people feed themselves through fish production, probably again creating outside of our border, competition with American producers using taxpayers' money. I guess that would tend to bother farmers.

**Don Bay - NASS**

I know Alabama is very important, not just in catfish but other aquaculture products, and we did plan to try in the future to address some of those areas that are lacking in statistical data at this time. We would appreciate input from your organization on some of the other areas in aquaculture that you feel we should consider surveying, at least on some interval, maybe not on an annual basis but maybe once every several years, so some baseline data on some of these other aquaculture products are available to the industry.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

Crawfish is a future commodity that might come in there because there's a tremendous production in Louisiana; particularly, South Carolina is moving forward. However, they've got some large crawfish farms up there now, too. I think very successful.

**Jim Cravey - Alabama Farmers Federation**

Just a few of the local eating establishments have started serving crawfish in Montgomery. Five to seven years ago no one would eat them. Of course, Mississippi State has been working on fresh water shrimp and that may catch on as well, I don't know. Steve is Director of our fruit and vegetable program. He may have some comments on pecans or some of the other items.

**Steve Guy - Alabama Farmers Federation**

I don't have any particular comments. I think the fruit and vegetable area is very well covered at this point. However, I do have one comment concerning a commodity in Alabama that seems to be sadly lacking in statistics. It's a \$2 billion a year industry in Alabama, and that's the forest industry. I haven't heard any mention of our forest products industry, and we are sadly lacking in statistical data on that industry. If we are talking about expansion of things like crawfish, horses, and goats, I think a \$2 billion a year industry certainly should not be left out, particularly when it's the number-one manufacturing industry in Alabama. So, we have been trying for several years with general persuasion to try to get more emphasis put on the forest industry, to get more data. I would hope that maybe you could look into that to see if we might be able to work in this area.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We've talked about that over the years. That's one of the things I listed as I was flying down here the other day, that we don't do anything on. You are correct. It's something that perhaps extends beyond what we would traditionally see as our mission in that we might ought to be estimating forest products that come from farms, but how do you define the



tree-farm and a farm which is operated by a big timber company. I don't know, there are a lot of definitional problems. Fred, we talked about timber prices for a long time.

**Fred Thorp - NASS**

Yes, I think that goes back as a major project in the mid-fifties, where they costed it out working with Forest Service. It's one of the big gaps that we don't cover--production or prices or any of that data.

**Steve Guy - Alabama Farmers Federation**

If it hadn't been for forest products back during the farm crisis 3 or 4 years ago, there would be a lot of farmers that would be gone right now. We see it's something well worth looking into. Maybe you could gather, while you're out there, some information on some of these other products such as whether they sold timber, how much, so forth and so on. Alabama already has information gathered from severance taxes that you could also use.

**Don Bay - NASS**

We have a jurisdictional situation within USDA as to whether Forest Service or NASS should do these kinds of surveys. They do some forest surveys, but they don't get into the production statistics like we normally do for other commodities in our program.

**Steve Guy - Alabama Farmers Federation**

As far as I know, I've been in it 18 years, I've never seen any Forest Service statistics come out like the kind you publish for other commodities.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We have done some cooperative work on forest products in States like Kansas concerning inventory of the total forest. That's a good point. I'll list that as something we will follow-up on.

**Jewell T. "Duffy" Barr - NASS, Montgomery, Alabama**

I might just make a comment. We are in the process of trying to do a farmers' opinion survey. It looks as if this week we are going to get it finalized. I'm stating this because I think Illinois took the lead on it and some of the other States might want to know about it. There is a desire to get some information, particularly farmers' opinions, in preparation for the 1990 Farm Bill. Alabama probably needs some thoughts and ideas from Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, and other Southeastern States. You might want to say more.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

These surveys are done mostly in cooperation with the local land grant institution or the local State Department of Agriculture with funding for the survey coming from that source. NASDA, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, is very interested in having this kind of survey done nationwide. Alabama is the only State I'm aware of, outside of the Midwest, doing this survey.

**Bob Robinson - ERS**

South Carolina did the survey a couple of years ago, this is a continuation. This is about the third such survey that has occurred over the last 4, 5, or 6 years. ERS has put some money into a national cooperative agreement, which is centered in Illinois, to try to help support a portion of that. We didn't have enough money to support the survey in each of the States but to support some of the publication work, some of the analysis that would come out of it, and the tabulation of survey results. But, we do have a small cooperative agreement with University of Illinois, with Harold Guither.

**Shirley Manchester - Florida Lime & Avocado Administrative Committees**

Thank you, my name is Shirley Manchester. First of all, I would like to personally thank you for the publications that you put out. I do use many of the reports. Looking through the material, I find that there are others that I could use. The questions that I have are basically the ones I talked about yesterday. I am interested in imports that come into the United States from the Caribbean as well as Central and South America. It would be of great value to our industry to get the information in a timely manner. There are rumors going around, and we need to make them true or squash them before they have impact on our industry. I have talked to Bill Crocker about it, and he is busy working on it. We find that in the information that's coming to us that this is an area, especially in limes, that is rapidly growing. It would be of great interest to know the different countries, the acres, and their production. My second item is about per capita consumption of fresh fruit, especially as it relates to limes. I understand that you do not have any report because you don't have the supply information. What would it take to get that information and how could our industry help you get that information?

**Bob Terry - NASS, Orlando, Florida**

I don't understand why the fresh information isn't available. It is for Florida on end-of-season production and possibly California which also has production. That's the only other State that I know of that would have any lime production. Of course, the other major supplier is Mexico. We import more limes into the United States from Mexico than Florida produces. Mexico is the primary other supplier of limes to the United States. Florida's production is available though on a fresh and processed basis.

**Boyd Buxton - ERS**

There are a number of per capita consumption items that we report where we do not publish all the supply utilization tables that go into the calculation of that number. Right off-hand I do not recall specifically the information that's lacking, but I will find that out and get in touch with you to see if something can be worked out in terms of getting that additional information.

**Bill Crocker - Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)**

Right now, we have got people in the Miami office going to APHIS at the airport and where ever else imports are coming in and getting data on everything that is coming in on a weekly basis. We aren't able to go down on a daily basis, yet. You mentioned limes yesterday, where were they coming in?

**H. B. Buchanan - AMS**

I think a good share are coming into the Ft. Pierce area.

**Bill Crocker - AMS**

So, the Miami office is not covering that. Is it an APHIS office they're coming through? We'd have to make connections with that office to get those limes. We use our own information on Mexican imports because it's better than the census data. If we can cover all the bases in South Florida, we can use our data rather than the census. However, we will concentrate on the limes.

**Shirley Manchester - Florida Lime & Avocado Administrative Committees**

Also, what about avocados from Chile?

**Bill Crocker - AMS**

We have import data on Chilean avocados because we get information off of the manifests supplied to us by the Foreign Agriculture Service. Actually, we get the number before the



boat shows up, so we have two ways of getting the Chilean avocado import data. We get the data from FAS supplied manifests when ships leave Chile and from fresh inspectors when the ships unload. I can make sure that Jim Cunningham lets you know when the boat has left Chile, and usually we have about a 7-day jump before it comes in. It takes 12 days for a boat to get from Chile to the United States, and usually we get about a 10-day jump before that boat shows up, so I can make sure Jim Cunningham gets in touch with you about Chilean avocados. We know whether it will be unloaded in Philadelphia or Tampa or Long Beach. Most of them come in at Philadelphia. Right now David Flood of the United Nations Market News in Boston is coming up with a report that tells what is becoming available in some of the Caribbean countries. He wants us in Market News to publish this when he does. I want to take a good look at it and see how he is doing it and what he is getting. It sounds like it's the kind of information we're looking for, what's going to be available, what time of the year, and when they are going to ship it. That is a good possibility for getting a handle on the data you are requesting. I will have to see how good his information is. He said he's going to talk to the major exporters in Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Guatemala.

#### **Boyd Buxton - ERS**

In ERS, we did a short research piece on looking at imports since the Caribbean Basin initiative. Using census data, we looked at those commodities being imported in terms of their rise or decrease over the period since the initiative was enacted. Some commodities didn't show a rise and actually decreased in some cases, so it's kind of a mixed bag. We did publish a short report in our Agricultural Outlook that reviewed some of the trends since the initiative was enacted.

#### **Charles Caudill - NASS**

We don't have a mission in foreign countries as far as statistics are concerned but we do technical consulting in a number of Central American Countries. We have a statistician stationed in Honduras for 2 to 5 years or as long as he is needed. I know he's been concentrating on estimating coffee production in that Country. I don't know whether he's doing anything with the other orchard crops or not, but I'll touch base with him and see if he knows what might be going on in Honduras in terms of limes or citrus that might eventually be shipped into this Country.

#### **Jerry Graham - Florida Citrus Mutual**

I would like to take the time to thank you for having this meeting today. The economic situation reports on citrus that deals with Florida and other U.S. citrus producing States and reports on Brazil, Japan, CBI, Mexico, the EEC, and all other areas are very crucial to our work. The economic research that ERS does, the per capita consumption on oranges and grapefruit, all the export and import data, it's very important to citrus and the kind of work the citrus commission is involved in. It's very helpful to us, especially 2 or 3 years ago when Brazil was dumping its frozen concentrated orange juice (FCOJ) on our market. We've had to use a lot of data you provide as well as from the U.S. Department of Commerce, the fruit outlook reports that you publish, the world production trade report, the fats and oils report. I met personally with Joe Summers, I know him, I know that the Florida Department of Citrus and members of Congress go down to Brazil and meet with Joe and tour that country. This report is very important as well as all of the agricultural attache reports. The commercial tree and acreage reports that Bob Terry and Bob Freie publish, their annual reports and their summaries, are very important to our work. There isn't anything that you publish that we don't rely heavily on. Without your support and your reports, we are dead in the water. There isn't any other organization like yours, any place, that provides us with the information that we need, and we appreciate your effort. As an economist, I speak from a practitioners standpoint in that, I need it for my work. The economic research that



ERS does provides me and other economists in the State with newly enlightened procedures to do our econometric models and work. I know I worked with David Stallings on foreign exchange values, David Tallent from FAS on Brazil, and with a lot of people in Washington. We really have a lot of respect for the work that you do. We, in the same token, opened up our shop for any kinds of needs that you might have. I told Boyd Buxton that we are going to work together on the cost of production with Jim Johnson and the Extension Service and also work with Bob Freie and Bob Terry. That cost of production study is crucial to our work. The University in Florida had published information in 1984, but it was 2 or 3 years old, and they were using audit data and information on processors and packers. We could never get our information from growers. Ron was responsible for undertaking the growers cost of production and publishing it as a grower cost of production for the 3 major citrus areas of the State, but we really don't have a real firm number to deal with. That number that you publish doesn't include land grants, cost of management that we need, in addition to the cost of production to determine what our breakeven cost is in the State. Orange growers are paid on pounds of solid basis. You are familiar with that as number of pounds of solid in a box of oranges, and juice content in a box of oranges. He is paid on how much orange juice content is in a standard 90-pound box. Without a real strong number on cost of production and then land costs and management, we can't calculate a State-wide average for breakeven. Ron and I came up with a so called cost of production number on the pounds-solid basis 2 or 3 years ago, but then I've had to sort of back into what the breakeven point would be with some hypothetical numbers on land costs and management costs. So, the citrus industry would be really best served if you could come up with a cost of production number that would represent a solid number that we could use, as well as to continue doing everything that you're doing. I know I can speak for Bobby McKown, Executive Vice President, he will do all he can to see that you continue to exist. I know there's some intentions under the Gramm Rudman Act, budget cut-backs are going on now in Washington, and we will be one of the very first to go on record for support of all that you do.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We appreciate it.

Jim do you want to say anything about the cost of production surveys and planning for citrus? I assume you are going to depend on Jerry and people like him for a lot of input before we finally get in the field.

**Jim Johnson - ERS**

That's true and Boyd has been to Florida. We have a trip scheduled to California to work with the industry there as well. We will work now and again this summer to make sure that our questionnaires are properly field tested. You know, since 1974, we were given a mandate to work field crops, livestock, and dairy statistics. We have expanded over the years, and our cost of production will now include other major types of commercial agriculture. We're missing information on the citrus industry, so we have added that this year and look forward to working with you. I also look forward to your support in the field. Let people know that we are there for a reason and that we need their support.

**Jerry Graham - Florida Citrus Mutual**

One of our greatest assets is representing more than 12,000 growers in this State. We have a publication circulating throughout the citrus industry, and it winds up in the funniest places well outside the State. So I'm sure that we could put that in there and it'll be long gone I'm sure.

**Jim Johnson - ERS**

Long about next January, Bob Freie and Ray Crickenberger will be in touch and they will be providing you with information. The producer needs to know that we're here for a

reason, and it is a valuable set of information for them and it's in their best interest to help us. We look forward to that support.

**Duke Chadwell - Citrus Administration Committee**

My name is Duke Chadwell with the Citrus Administration Committee. We work closely with Bob Freie and Bob Terry. We put out a marketing order report weekly showing statistical information on mainly fresh shipment, including both fresh and processed. One comment I want to make is that the Florida citrus industry taxes itself very, very heavily. Bob explained yesterday how we acquired our industry data in past years. In other words, we tax ourselves and pay for what we need. If other industries want some extra services, I think they probably should come up with some additional money and pay for it themselves rather than just expect great father in Washington to do it all for them. My opinion is, we have a good system down here and it works. I do think it needs to be brought up that the citrus industry and growers work in conjunction with the USDA and are paying for some of the services.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We appreciate your input. The Florida Citrus Program of Statistics would not be what it is without the Florida input. You know the Federal Government doesn't put very much into statistics for citrus in this State. I don't know what the breakdown percentages are, but I believe there are more State employees, mostly working on citrus, some on vegetables, in the Florida office than we have Federal employees.

We're willing to take money from anybody. When we did the horse survey in New Jersey, the horse industry came up with \$115 to \$120 thousand to pay for that survey. The malt and barley industry gives us money every year in a trust fund that we use to collect additional data. We get money from the Filbert Market Order in Oregon to pay for some tree counts that we do on filberts (hazel nuts). The California fruit and vegetable industries, fruits and nuts particularly, put a lot of money in to our California statistical organization. They do that because they make use of the data in their marketing plans. They make multi-million dollar decisions based on our July almond report. We are appreciative of anybody that can come up with money to help pay for surveys. So far, we have been able to do these extra surveys without any increase in overhead. When we get money from the State Department of Agriculture we don't take one penny of that in overhead. If we get \$100 thousand from Michigan, we put \$100 thousand of that right back into Michigan to collect and process data. We don't take anything to pay for Federal salaries or anything else, but that's getting tougher not to do. The \$10 million we get from the States each year is a target of our budget people in Washington. They want us to take off some overhead to help run the operation. So far, I have been able to not do that. Jim had a comment, then we will come back to you.

**Jim Cravey - Alabama Farmers Federation**

Coming back to forestry. Is the reason we are not doing anything on forestry territorial or is it money?

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

It's both, it's more money than it is the other. I think the territorial thing can be worked out if the funds can be raised.

We need to look at what a program would consist of, what you're really thinking about. I think some sort of forest products program is possible.



**Jim Cravey - Alabama Farmers Federation**

It would be of no use to our producers if you didn't include the total forest industry, including imports to tie the whole thing together. It's just like the citrus folks. If they just knew what they produced in Florida and didn't know what they were expecting in California and in imports, it really wouldn't be economically useful.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

When you get to talking about imports and everything, you look to ERS to pull all this together.

**Don Bay - NASS**

I think the timber price series is an area in the forestry picture that is also very lacking, and producers don't know what the going price is, and that to me puts them at a great disadvantage, not having known prices.

**Steve Guy - Alabama Farmers Federation**

You're right, there is no information source for price right now. Well, there is a private source that you can get on a quarterly basis, but price information is not available to most producers.

**Chuck Zimmerman - Florida AgriNet Radio Network**

I wanted to echo the comments about how important your statistics are to an organization like ours that has come into being quite similar to other news reporting-type services. We are needing more and more statistics as we've developed farm broadcasting in this State, in addition to just being able to report information to people that need it to make decisions on how they run their business. It's impacting us from the standpoint of how companies want to market to producers in this State, and just recently, maybe not some of the commodities being discussed here but in the area of livestock, there is a very significant lack of some county information that's only available out of the census. These companies don't have offices in Florida you know. The only thing they have to go with is what we can supply to show where things are and how they should target their marketing money from that standpoint. It is vital. We use as much data as we can get. I'm hearing some comments about things being cut back and we are concerned with that too. If there's some kind of input we can provide, we'll be glad to do so. I'm not even sure we're getting all the information that's available, or that we even know everything that's available. That's part of why I wanted to attend to be able to discuss and see what exists.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

This catalog has all the statistics reports that we publish in NASS, and there is some material in the handout on what ERS has available including some things they are beginning to put out on floppy disks.

**Chuck Zimmerman - Florida AgriNet Radio Network**

Well, for example, livestock county data. We can get totals State-wide, but there's not much available on a county basis. That's not true just for Florida, some of your other largest livestock States don't have it and we are concerned, you know. There's talk of cutting it back even further. But, when you can't figure out how many head of livestock exist in a certain county, and that kind of stuff, it makes it very difficult to try to make decisions. In the area of fruits, vegetables, and citrus, I'm not as up on that myself as to what we need. We subscribe to a private service to get price information that we report on fruits and vegetables. We try, in the very brief time we have, to put our programs together, figure out what is the important statistics in a study or survey, and report that fact. That's what we are, farm broadcasters. Companies make decisions on how they are going to advertise their products or service based on that data. We are getting more into the national market as we've developed, and we see nationally that they are becoming more market and

commodity specific in targeting their marketing effort. In the past, a company might have blanketed an area. Now they are saying we need to go into a 3-county or smaller area instead of a 15-county area. Is it more advantageous to spend our money just in this one tight little area.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

The NASS mission is to provide national and State level estimates. If we produce county estimates, we generally depend on the State and local jurisdiction to pay for that, particularly for things like livestock. We do have a Federal program of county estimates on the major program crops--wheat, cotton, and so forth. The money to pay for those county estimates is not entirely in our budget. We get money every year from the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation and from ASCS, the program agencies, to help pay for county level data. We have our funding difficulties at the Federal level but also at the State level. It makes it tough to keep a continuous program going. We don't do county estimates in Florida on livestock. Is that right Bob?

**Bob Freie - NASS, Orlando, Florida**

That's right. In fact, we had proposed it as a new initiative for the coming year, but getting it through the legislature will be difficult.

**Duffy Barr - NASS, Montgomery, Alabama**

Charlie, I might add that all of the NASS State offices are listed in the catalog. I know that quite often, we get people contacting us asking for county estimates. We put out an annual release called the Alabama Statistical Bulletin and our Commissioner of Agriculture lets us mail it to them free. This publication does have a lot of our major commodities in it by county levels. I point this out because many of our State offices do this and sometimes it may not be known at the Federal level. So, if you will contact these listed State offices, they will try to accommodate you.

**John Adams - Office of the Governor**

We use your data all the time for writing the Governor's speeches, making policy decisions, and answering letters that come in. So, I particularly appreciate the opportunity to find out more about the data that you have. We talk to Bob Freie all the time, when answering questions. The one point I would like to make with you is this: It's important to keep in mind that this information is not relevant just to the agricultural community. The \$5.2 billion that you put out for agricultural production in Florida for 1987 will be repeated by the press, in the Governor's speeches or whatever, and it doesn't include forestry from Florida. That's a point that needs to be brought out here. While the data are assembled primarily for agricultural use, we need to remember that a good bit of it is used for popular appeal. By making your data as complete and relevant as possible, it will help tell your story and help with funding. I was interested, yesterday, in the presentation by ERS. One of the areas they are involved in is popular articles for magazines. There is such a vast array anymore of visual communications for periodicals, radio, and T.V. shows where people are looking for time to fill or looking for stories. There's a lot of really interesting stories in agriculture. Aquaculture, catfish production in Alabama and Florida is important. You talked about catfish and crawfish but tropical fish is a lot bigger in Florida. I think people would appreciate data on some of the fascinating things going on in south Florida. There's a lot of stories to tell and I think we can do a better job of telling those stories to the people that are making decisions and help them understand agriculture better. I don't know how you can do that with less money, but that's your challenge.



**Charles Caudill - NASS**

Well, we are doing a lot of that. ERS, I think in recent years, has done a good job in improving the popular articles that they put out. They have a magazine called the Farm Line. Part of the trouble is that those things get used in the media and ERS never gets any credit. It doesn't really matter, except that the legislature may say, I don't need ERS, I can get it from the popular farm press. They don't realize that it came originally from ERS. In a number of States, particularly in those where we have State money, we do a much better job of putting our publications out in an attractive, eye appealing way. I don't know whether you have seen a copy of the equine survey results that were collected in New Jersey, but that was a first class publication paid for by the horse industry.

**Bob Freie - NASS, Orlando, Florida**

I'd like to comment Charlie, on one area that you didn't mention and that's turf grass. We have been approached several times recently for data on this industry. A survey like that was done in Florida back in about 1974.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We have done turf grass surveys in a number of States. Again, that's a State request and the State pays for the survey. Pennsylvania is getting ready to do a turf grass survey this year, and I think the last one they did was back in the late 1960's. This is another big industry where there's not much knowledge.

The cooperative relationships that our Florida office has is one of the premier cooperative arrangements in the whole country. We do have a cooperative agreement with every State Department of Agriculture, and Florida is right up near the top in terms of the support and input they put into our program and we do appreciate it.

**Mark Brown - Florida Department of Citrus**

I'm Mark Brown with the Florida Department of Citrus, also with the University of Florida Food and Resource Economics Department. Basically what I would say would be a repeat of what's been said by others. I work mostly with citrus so will limit my comments to citrus. We depend very much on the reports that Bob Freie and Bob Terry are involved with. We depend on the tree censuses to make projections of what the supply will be in the upcoming year and try to compare it to demand to give the growers some idea of what kind of prices they can expect in the coming year. Most of the work you do, we know, is as of the moment and we try to project that forward. There's a number of reports that we use on a regular basis.

I would like to mention a couple of areas that we need more work in for citrus and other items. One of these areas is food away from home, both institutional and restaurant type sales. I'm not sure what organizations could be helpful in this area. I know that a national food consumption survey would provide some information, but that's primarily for food consumption at home. Anyhow, that's an area that needs additional attention. We have a good data base for citrus compared to many of the other commodities. Another area that needs attention, that's already been mentioned, is the demand and supply picture with respect to foreign markets. FAS is very helpful but more help in developing more consistent data bases is needed. For example, Brazil is the other large citrus producing area with respect to concentrate in the world, but we have difficulty getting consistent data out of there. The attache down there is very helpful, but any additional work that he can do with the Brazilians to start tree inventory surveys similar to what Florida does would be most helpful. Basically, we are very grateful for all the help we get from USDA and the Florida office.

**Bob Robinson - ERS**

We've recognized the need for additional data on both levels of food use you mentioned and have had some proposed budget initiatives in the past but haven't been able to obtain the funds to collect the data. It's a real important area and the Agency recognizes that the other data need, with respect to foreign markets and consistent data, is even more difficult to satisfy. Let's take countries like Brazil and Argentina, their ability to collect and publish data is close to nonexistent, so a lot of supplemental work has to go on before this can be improved.

**Mark Brown - Florida Department of Citrus**

Somebody made a major point awhile back about setting up an infrastructure first and getting it all into place so you can do these surveys. NASS and ERS have an infrastructure that allows them to do these surveys whenever money is available, but these foreign countries have no infrastructure what so ever. We have a great big hurdle to get over first before we can do anything else.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We have discussions underway right now about putting a Statistician in Brazil to serve as a consultant to see if we can't help to improve that infrastructure down there. I am not sure of the status right now, but your comments will give us added emphasis to push that. The funding would come from the World Bank, so there is a recognized need that Brazilian data need to be greatly improved.

**Mark Brown - Florida Department of Citrus**

Another problem that we face that is related to the previous discussion is about the European market. We depend on European demand data and there are a lot of difficulties using that because of the way they define things, etc. I don't know what level of cooperation exists, but this is an area where improvement of data consistency would be most helpful. We, for example, don't know how much FCOJ is going into Europe because they don't define it the same way that we do.

**Bob Robinson - ERS**

Isn't it significant to know that on January 1, 1989, the U.S. shifted to the harmonized system. That basically will cause some changes in the way we characterize items so it will move it consistent with other countries and should help a little bit.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We'll pass your comments on to FAS to be sure they know of your concerns. I'm sure you've done that yourself but it doesn't hurt to keep it coming from all directions.

**Linda Metzger - Belle Glade Job Service Office**

Really I'm here to learn, but I was very interested in the farm labor information. On the local office level, we get so many calls from growers in the area, advocacy groups wanting to know the number of migrant seasonal workers in the area, and what the wage rates are. Also, our own State is working on an instrument to do prevailing wage rate surveys, so I appreciate the amount of information I've been able to pick-up over the last 2 days.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

Speaking of labor, I hope we didn't leave the impression yesterday that we are satisfied with our labor program. We're on record with Senator Hatfield that to do the program the way it needs to be done to serve the interest of the workers and farmers, we ought to radically modify what we do. The only reason we don't do that is that we need \$7.3 million more than what we have. It's ironic that the present program is costing growers, and maybe workers in some cases, many, many millions of dollars more than it would cost if we did the



labor survey correctly. Under the present deficit situation, I just don't see us being able to do much more than we're currently doing. We're not satisfied with the program, and we're doing the very best job we can with what we have.

**Linda Metzger - Belle Glade Job Service Office**

I understand sir, but I just wanted to point out that we are bombarded with questions at the local level concerning the county number of migrant workers and prevailing wage rates. I really don't know of any publication that contains that kind of data.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

Are you collecting any data on agricultural wages?

**Linda Metzger - Belle Glade Job Service Office**

We collect prevailing wages in conjunction with the H-2A program.

**Al Helms - Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association**

I'm Al Helms with the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association with the labor division. The only comment I have is about the credibility of the number of workers and wage rates published by NASS, especially about how they relate to adverse wage rates and the Replacement Agricultural Workers (RAW) program.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

Well, look very closely at what we say about the reliability of the data. Our sample sizes and sampling errors in the data are no secret, and that's why we say we recognize it needs improvement. We don't publish data for most States because some sample sizes are so small. We have to group States together and publish a regional rather than State figure. We publish State figures only for Florida, Hawaii, and California. Regional figures used for H2-A wage rates may be favorable to one State and very unfavorable to another State in that particular region.

**Al Helms - Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association**

The only other question I have concerns the sample. It doesn't seem to include a representation of farms considering acres, productivity, etc. I gather that the sample includes a lot of family farms.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

No, we stratify by number of workers, so a farm with a lot of hired workers would be selected with a high probability. A farm with no hired workers might be selected with a chance of 1 in 1,000. So, we use two measures of size and the bigger they are the higher probability they'll be in the sample. That's one thing Bob Freie pointed out yesterday. He went back and checked the Florida sample. I thought we had some farms in Florida that would be in our sample every quarter, but that's not true. The largest sampling rate in Florida turns out to be 1 out of 7. So, every large grower in the quarterly sample represents 7 farms.

**Houston Ham - Bureau of Labor Market Information**

There are only three ways to get the county level labor data needed. One way is to have the Congress appropriate the additional money, which they aren't going to because they are primarily interested in national statistics. A second way is to have the State legislature appropriate the money, which they won't do unless enough political pressure is brought to bear. The third way would be for users to pay for the surveys the way the Citrus Commission pays for the data it needs. About the only practical way for data users to get the county level data they need is for them to pay for it themselves.

**Ron Mahan - Collier Enterprises**

We utilize all of the different information we get from all the different agencies. We look at it to help us in making our decisions for future planning activities, and also for analyzing what's going on in our organization at the present time. I just want to make a couple of comments about the reliability of the data. I believe yesterday something came up about the reliability of average hourly wage rate for the piece-rate workers of the U.S. Something that might help with the average statistics reports would be a standard deviation or variance published along with the means to let us know about the variation behind the collected statistics. We are also currently concerned about water issues in Florida. We are looking for economic studies on water rights; water issues related to farming.

**Bob Robinson - ERS**

Water laws vary a lot across the U.S. Most efforts thus far and the major thrust of the new budget initiatives in USDA are basically trying to make both biological and economic assessments of the impact of Agriculture on ground water quality. This is rather a broadbase initiative involving work with ARS particularly who is doing studies across the U.S. ERS will be involved with economic studies in a much smaller way. Most of the money that ERS will get will be for data collection since the data base for any type of water study is sorely lacking.

**John Vansickle - University of Florida**

I have two basic concerns about data programs of USDA. One minor and one major: The minor concern involved decisions that lead to the selection of crops included in the NASS program. For example, your current program collects data on eleven fresh market vegetable crops. This data program has been in decline at the very time that the importance to the produce industry, agriculture, and U.S. agriculture has been growing. I understand it is difficult to collect data without the required resources. I do hope that the specialty's program does not take an unfair portion of any cut in expenditures for data collection or for research within ERS. I hope our leaders recognize the importance of the data to agricultural and other users and improve the support so that adequate programs are conducted.

My major concern involves USDA data dissemination practices. Data dissemination was one of the primary aspects of the AMS Market News program which we analyzed in a study. USDA currently promotes a program called EDI (Electronic Dissemination of Information) that they fund with Martin Marietta. The logic on that program is that USDA should have a central distribution point for data they collect and distribute. I agree with the logic of a single source vehicle for data distribution, in general. The problem I have is that USDA leaders have failed to recognize the requirements of your different agencies. An EDI type program may work well for ERS and for much of the NASS data. It is emphatically not a good vehicle for distribution of AMS data. The data collected by all of the Agencies (NASS, ERS, AMS) are collected for different purposes and the requirements of the agencies differ. The EDI system does not and will not work for AMS. They currently distribute less than 7 percent of their data by EDI. My understanding is that anymore data distributed on that Network would seriously impact resources available for other parts of AMS Market News programs. Let me emphasize that these concerns are not just my own, but have also been expressed by AMS, and I hope the new USDA administration takes a new look at the EDI program in general. My second concern in data dissemination is the format of how data are disseminated. AMS currently disseminates most of their data in a text format and it's difficult to extract data from those reports for decisions other than current marketing decisions. Again, referring to the study that I conducted for AMS, we found that AMS could greatly improve value of their data if they reported it in a format that allows it to be databased so that it can be extracted for a variety of decisions. AMS has taken those recommendations and is now in the process of changing their system to a computerized database. They are to be applauded for this effort. I



think other USDA agencies should be gearing data dissemination practices toward the database concept. I hope the efforts continue along those lines. I applaud the efforts of USDA in data collection. I, like most others, want you to do more, but I think most others recognize the resource constraints by which you operate. Data dissemination is an area which needs a serious review. EDI does not work for AMS and it may not work well for the other agencies. Secondly, I urge all USDA data collectors and disseminators to be concerned about disseminating data in a database format. It will enhance the value of data for all users. I think it's a win, win situation. Now I want to say a few things about some issues I pointed out.

First of all, when it comes to the crops or the programs, particularly within NASS, I get the impression that we make some rather broad or sweeping statements about the importance of a particular segment or sector of Agriculture based on the data that's collected by NASS. I know it's not entirely NASS's fault. You do communicate the data and you do communicate how it's collected and how accurate that data are. I think it's important to recognize that the value of the specialties program is limited to those crops that we collect data for. The value of specialty crops in agriculture is far greater than those. You were talking about the citrus forecast yesterday, and I think that it may be of benefit to put out those general formulas that are used in calculating estimates of production and perhaps some of the raw data that goes into that formula. I'm not talking about the firm-level type data but the general level in terms of trees by areas within the State. Perhaps, we could gain some additional information and those decisionmakers that are geared to using that could use that within their own programs. My other general comment, based on this, comes back to data distribution. I think that the method by which AMS is distributing data is probably one of the best that could exist. They are in a broadcast mode of data. I think it could be improved in terms of the broadcast mode, but that's a method by which we should be able to send out all USDA data. We shouldn't have to rely on a wholesaler to hold all of that data to go in and ask for it. We should be giving users the opportunity to be in a receive mode and receive all the data distributed by USDA, and pull out of that data screen just those sources they want. It wouldn't be that difficult to gear the system toward that. I think that we unfortunately geared our mentality toward an EDI system, and the EDI system may not be the best way for us to operate.

#### **Charles Caudill - NASS**

Let's address the EDI issue for a moment. The contract with Martin Marietta is currently being re-competed, just about exactly as it is right now. One thing we explored at a policy board meeting 2 weeks ago was to do away with this business of level-one versus level-two users, and I think we will do that so everybody will have level-two capabilities. Level-one users are people like Dialcom and the major commercial users that get the entire report. Martin Marietta is a wholesaler. Dialcom's a retailer; they go in and get the whole report, repackage and sell it to their customers. We in USDA as level-two users can go in and get any particular piece of data that we want. We don't have to go through a private sector/retailer. We hope to make level-two usage available to everyone. The contract is a Departmental level contract. The agencies have had very little to say in the whole process, but we are working to try to change that. ERS has been very, very concerned with it. We in NASS have been trying to work on a database system, and when we get that fully in place we will have a system that would enable us to set-up procedures whereby users could tap that system and get not only current data but also archive data. EDI does not give you any historical data, only a current perishable set of data. We have our crop reports on EDI 2 or 3 minutes after 3 p.m. when they are released. We will share your comments on EDI with the Office of Information and Resources Management. I invited them to come to these meetings because I wanted them to hear what you had to say about EDI.

**John Vansickle - University of Florida**

It seems odd that we are going to go back out and re-let an EDI-type contract without revisiting the requirements for the system. We haven't gone back to analyzing. There have been a lot of changes within the industry, not only with agriculture, but within the data dissemination industry since that was originally conceived as an idea. We shouldn't be going out with the same set of requirements that we did then. It bothers me that within the last 2 weeks an edict was passed down that AMS could not pull off reports from other agencies and distribute those over their communications network, so people that get data from this dissemination source can't get NASS or ERS reports anymore. They are not allowed to go in and pull those down and distribute those because they are afraid of losing the support of the EDI system. Now to me, that's looking at things backwards. We are out to serve agriculture, not to force a certain type of data distribution on agriculture. If we are doing a better job of serving agriculture by distributing those reports over the AMS network, then that's the way they should be done.

If you review the users, and part of my study was looking at the users of the AMS communications network, the users of the AMS communications network are not private users, they are also wholesalers. I don't think there is a single private user that is a subscriber to the communications network of AMS. Most of the AMS subscribers are the Pronets, Agridata, etc. So, I don't think that's competition from the standpoint of competing with private industry.

The concept of EDI is good, just like the theory of perfect competition is good as an economist, but it doesn't exist. The concept of EDI is an excellent system, but it's not working the way it is today. That's the point we need to communicate to our leaders in Washington.

**Ron Mahan - Collier Enterprises**

I just want to echo a little bit about when we started our company 4 years ago, approximately when this EDI was being kicked off. We weren't so concerned with whether or not it was a commercial product we had to pay for. We finally got so frustrated with the process, we gave up. I spent months trying to work with this EDI system to get information. It wasn't working, it couldn't produce it in a fashion that we could use it at all, from the standpoint of timeliness, a lot of times. I know there were probably a lot of bugs in the early system, they may be worked out now, but it boiled down to trying to work between a Government agency and a private sector company. We would get conflicting reports. I wrote letters to John Block, we were so frustrated over it. It just got shuffled back down. You had no choice and you had to deal with this system, and it's not providing what we need. If something like that were up for renewal, I would highly recommend that other systems be looked at in terms of not just renewing what's there. We've not even gone back to revisit that until now. We are kind of at a point in our development where we are interested in even providing better service to our listeners and to our customers. I am interested in finding out if there is some source, other than some of these private contractor sources, for this kind of information.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

The contract with Martin is being re-competed and again Government procurement policy requires you generally to go with the lowest cost firm, although some inputs of quality and service should come into that process.

**Ron Mahan - Collier Enterprises**

We were one of the earliest subscribers to EDI. From a technical standpoint, there would be days we couldn't even access it. From a physical, technical standpoint, something went wrong. We never could figure out what it was and no one could tell us. I spent hours on the phone with Martin Marietta. The concept was great. We thought, here's the ideal source, we can get everything out of here we need without having to contact all these different offices, which is pretty



much what we do today. That's how we get out prices, quotes, estimates, etc. It is very frustrating for our kind of user.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

I want you to know that John Lee in ERS has been carrying just the message that you're talking about.

**John Vansickle - University of Florida**

I know that. I realize that the people who are the data collectors and data distributors, for the most part, are in agreement with what I've said about data distribution. It has apparently gotten into the hands of a few people in terms of supporting the EDI system.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

I believe the technical problems with Martin have largely been solved. You can get on the system and get what's there, it's just not there in a form that can be directly utilized by a lot of data users.

**John Vansickle - University of Florida**

I would also like to ask a question based on your comments about competition. Should we be avoiding means by which the data becomes more accessible to agricultural people, which in essence is what we're doing because we are forcing the system. There are means to go into a broad dissemination of that data using satellite technology similar to what AMS has, and there are some low cost providers in the Midwest. Is the practice of dissemination a hands-off enterprise in and of itself. I understand private users should be allowed to take your data and repackage it in a format that they think communicates a better message. To me that's where private enterprise fits in data dissemination, is repackaging, not necessarily in saying that we have to stay away from it and they get to disseminate it.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We are in complete agreement on that, except the policy level officials at the Department and OMB. In fact, we have a major conflict with OMB as to whether the Federal Government should be collecting and disseminating any statistics at all. There are people that say we should turn that over to private sector. They even told ERS their program should be turned over to private consulting economists. We think the Federal Government has a role in collecting and disseminating information. The hardest pill that our Agency ever had to swallow was when we were forced in the early 1980's to start charging for subscriptions to our releases. There were people out in the country who had worked in our Agency 20 or 30 years who felt like we were there to serve agriculture, and the fact that we started charging for this information, even though it's a relatively small subscription fee, really upset a lot of our staff. It did mean that we saved some money because when people started to pay for it they were a little bit more discriminating in what they asked for. We save about a million dollars a year in postage and printing costs, but we don't make any money on subscriptions.

Going back to your first concern that you said was minor. You talked about how we select items for inclusion into our program. I would welcome any input from you or anybody else as to how we should select the things that we survey.

**John Vansickle - University of Florida**

I suspect you got a lot of input when you cut back the number of crops here a few years ago, from the eleven that you had at that particular time. Again, my concern on that comes from the standpoint of recognizing the needs within the agricultural industry.

There are sectors of agriculture that are geared toward development of programs similar to what the Department of Commerce has in terms of collecting data, but there are other sectors of agriculture that are not geared this way. It would be much more difficult to get that kind of data collected, for example, for the watermelon growers. There's an industry that is in dire straits because if it was not for AMS, there wouldn't be any decent information available. To me, the watermelon growers need help just about more than any other group in the produce industry, because they are so scattered and so independent and because of their selling method. I also understand your lack of resources and your need to be able to select crops whereby you can collect data and put it together. I think our biggest concern, and probably one that won't be done, is that we ought to be putting more resources into that effort.

#### **Charles Caudill - NASS**

Specialty commodities are an easy target because for the major commodities corn, soybeans, wheat, rice, and cotton the Department must have data because they are farm program crops. In NASS, about 60 percent of our budget goes for field crops, and I include peanuts, tobacco, and potatoes as field crops when I'm using that percentage. Only about 10 percent of our budget goes for specialties--fruit, nuts, vegetables, citrus, etc. We can cut our entire specialty program out and there's very little savings left that we can come up with.

#### **John Walpole - Sunny Point Farms**

I'd like to confine my comments to two particular points. I'm concerned about the collective impact that your efforts have on legislation, future legislation, and for the public image of we who are in the food producing industry. I know how important, through experience, words are in legislation when it comes to the powers that administer the laws. I was looking at page 14 of your farm labor definitions and I found it interesting in that I think I found one other definition on what a farmer is. In my experience, I had some opportunities to discover some information, and I give a little background on this: Prior to the 1985 Farm Bill, publicity brought to light some Arabian Prince or something that had some land in Texas and had picked up a couple million dollars for not planting. This prompted legislation in 1985 to identify what a farm was only to find out that other farm legislation had about 12 other definitions for what a family farm was. I think Title 7 of the code has the intent of Congress and it breaks it down into two intentions to deal with family farms and other farms or possibly the conglomerate, if I might use that word. I'm concerned that the American family farm is being ignored in the definition, and I would certainly hope that collectively the input that you have in future legislation would try to solidify for all of the Department of Agriculture what a family farm is versus the conglomerate farm. An example of that came out following the 1986 drought that we experienced in South Carolina where a 400-acre tomato farmer who brought in 200 migrant people was declared a non-family farm, but the Kansas midwestern farmer who brought in \$500,000 worth of migrant combines to harvest his 4,000 acres of wheat was a family farm. It simply was a play on words, but a farmer who produced the effort within the framework of the definition of labor wasn't considered a family farmer if he had to hire people to do the labor. I think we need an update of the definition. The definition of a family farm is very important, and I hope you will help with this new definition in any way you can.

The need for farm labor that needs to be replaced and how many workers there will be are determined by that equation. It's possible, if the Department of Labor uses the wrong balance of the equation, that we could end up with no need. The brunt of that is, there will be less producers because there will be less workers and these producers will get more money. However, somebody's going to go hungry in the process, and I guess we will feed them with foreign produce that is being grown where they have the liberty to use whatever pesticides and everything else they want. I caution that we might be sending the family farm into extinction, supporting the conglomerate farms and also importing foods that have very little regulations in its growing, as far as environmental policies are concerned.



The other thing I would like to say is to encourage you to get other farmers interested in coming to such meetings so we can be a more informed people which will enable us to help you in your job in Washington and on a State level.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

For statistical purposes, I don't think we have ever attempted to define the family farm. There are several definitions of a family farm that have floated around, none of which are really that good because the family farmer is an evolving concept and it's difficult to get hold of and what would have been a family farm under many of these definitions, wouldn't be today. Your point is excellent but the resolution of that point is extremely difficult.

**Walt Mitchell - Georgia Peanut Producers Association**

I would appreciate you telling me how I can get this information on the peanut industry. Simply, there are 560 peanut buying points in the U.S. In the last 2 years, these buying points have been furnished with a computer so that they can send daily peanut tonnage reports to Kansas City. This operates through ASCS. This information, the daily tonnage reports, is very important to our producers, and there are some 12,000 peanut producers in Georgia that grow about 47 percent of all the peanuts in the country, when making marketing decisions to sell or put their peanuts in the loan program. I wrote to Charles Brader and asked him if he could get this information from the computer center in Kansas City and make it available to our industry on a daily basis, and we would disseminate it to our producers. Basically, the answer I got was that the ASCS computer software now in use would not allow Market News to obtain all information required for the tonnage report, instead it will make the information available on a State-by-State basis and even then would only present the data for the daily total for each individual buying point. Then he went on to say the Fruit and Vegetable Market News program does not have the personnel or the budget to do what we want to do. I wrote him back and told him our industry would provide the funds to compile those reports if we could just get the raw data that exists in Kansas City. That's the way it is right now, the information is going in daily to Kansas City. How can I get that information faxed to Georgia for our producers?

**Bill Crocker - AMS**

It's ASCS's responsibility to get the computer up with software that would provide the information the way we want it. I don't see any reason why we can't do that. This is not AMS data but ASCS data, and we are willing to cooperate any way we can to get that. Right now the data are not in the manner that we can utilize it.

**Larry Snipes - NASS, Athens, Georgia**

This past year AMS was able to obtain the tonnage data on a belated basis, not as current as we have in the past because of some problem with software in ASCS. These forms and these data also include the prices and value of the daily tonnage which NASS is responsible for in the estimates of monthly prices received by farmers for this crop. The data are on the smart card. We talked with ASCS at the national and State level in an effort to get these data, and it is still under negotiation as to whether they can get the available software.

**Fred Thorp - NASS**

It's not just software, it's the distribution process. We talked to ASCS and it seemed like the form has all the information you need. You look at the form, and if it is filled out, it has just what you want, it's just what we want. The only way in the current processing schedule to get the price information is to go back to the individual buying points that submit the data, because the price data simply are not forwarded.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We will follow-up on this, you need it, we need it. It is one example where the whole Department has put in technology that's supposed to make data more readily available than it ever was in the past. It's something we need to address, and we will talk to the ASCS Administrator and whoever else we need to in order to get some action started on that.

**Walt Mitchell - Georgia Peanut Producers Association**

The most important parts are the tonnages that's sold for commercial use and the tonnages that go into the loan program. This can have a very vital influence on producers' decision on when and how to sell.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

If there are no further comments, I'd like to thank all of you for your participation, our Florida office for assisting with the meeting, and the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association for hosting us at this very nice facility.



**DATA USERS MEETING**  
**Sacramento, California**  
**March 8, 1989**

**Richard Wetzel - California Wheat Commission**

I am concerned about the reporting of durum wheat in California and Arizona. Generally speaking, our acreage is in winter wheat, which is planted in the fall and harvested in the early summer, usually June-July. Durum wheat grown in the northern Great Plains is planted in the spring and harvested in the fall. With the current reporting system, durum wheat in California is reported under that same planting scenario--spring plant, fall harvest. Our durum wheat here in the desert district are planted in December or January and harvested in May. We basically have the crop harvested before the first estimate even comes out in August. I would like to suggest that you create a category for desert durum and report it in the same cycle as winter wheat. I think the drought last year highlighted the fact that California/Arizona have become a major supplier in the durum industry because all of our durum is irrigated, and we have 80 or 90-bushel yields. If you looked at the production in North Dakota last year, yields were about half of normal.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

I think we have had this question raised in the past, I doubt if at that time we had this amount of acreage. In the next few months, we will be doing our 5-year census review and that is an appropriate time for us to consider a question like this.

**Don Bay - NASS**

We would have to look at the relative size, importance, and cost of separating it out. It's certainly a reasonable suggestion, and we will take a serious look at what can be done next year.

**Wade Strom - Wine Institute**

On an international basis, it seems to me things are happening a lot faster than they used to. If ERS could encourage FAS to do more international market reports, that would be a big help to us. On the national front, the wine business is changing fairly quickly; Texas, New Mexico, and Oregon are all coming in. I have already sent a letter to Jim Smith (NASS Commodity Statistician) asking for more breakdown information from those States and other States that are now starting to become wine producers. On the local level, grape acreage is changing everyday. We are asking for information on those coming into production in a preliminary report on the top 10 varieties before a full report is released. This early release would be a big help to the industry.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

The grape reports and a lot of wine reports we put out here in California are possible because either the industry or State funds are made available. The Federal portion is really very small. You mentioned the increase in grape acreage in other States. Oregon did an inventory of grape acreage 2 years ago. That survey was funded by the industry. Wine grapes and other grapes are increasing in other parts of the country, and we need to look at a comprehensive program to cover these crops. That will be an important part of our list of projects to consider in the future.

**Jim Tippet - NASS, Sacramento, California**

On the top 10 varieties, I think we would have a hard time getting that information to you early because it is a massive project and our summaries are not setup to spin-off top varieties. I would be concerned that the earlier summary might not be reliable when compared with the entire summary. I don't know whether we would be providing a service or disservice in that case. We can look into it.

**Dave Kleweno - NASS, Sacramento, California**

How critical is it for you to have the information 10 days or a month earlier? You seem to say that you're having to act in advance of the final report.

**Wade Strom - Wine Institute**

We would like to have an estimate a month earlier if possible. People are always looking for the variety changes.

**Jim Tippet - NASS, Sacramento, California**

If I understand what you are saying, you would like to see the report not just days but even months earlier. We will be glad to work with you and/or other people in the industry to get input to see if timing can be adjusted.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

You mentioned ERS encouraging FAS to do more international market reports. Are there some FAS reports now that you think need to be expanded?

**Wade Strom - Wine Institute**

I think if FAS could be encouraged to report exports for major States and the 10 or 20 major export markets, not just for our industry, but for all commodities on a systematic basis, it would be helpful.

**Kenneth S. Sakurada - University of Nevada**

As a county agent, my first responsibility was to provide the weekly crop and livestock report. It was part of the job. I think over the years we felt a sense of responsibility to encourage the producers to provide accurate information. I notice not only in our State, but in other States, there's a changing of the guard. There is a number of new younger staff members that have not been exposed to or understand this cooperative agreement. I think that it might be important to renew that cooperation, particularly in the States where county agents are asked to provide the information. I think it would pay to have some understanding at the field level and by our administration, with an emphasis on that cooperative agreement, so our agents understand that it is important they provide the information.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

That's a good suggestion. There is such an agreement between the two Administrators (NASS and Extension Service), and it provides the background document for the cooperative work that we do at the State level. I'm not certain the current Director of Extension in Washington knows about that agreement because I have not personally talked to him about it, but I will go back and we will revisit the agreement. There is work going on at the State level, where our State Statisticians work with the State Directors of Extension, and I think that relationship is probably stronger at the State level than at the national level. We need to tell these young people about the importance of the statistical data that we ask the Extension Service to report. The county agents are the primary reporters for our weekly crop and weather bulletin that's put out in Washington. The past year has really emphasized how critical the report is. We added questions last year to better



assess the drought conditions. The county agents' assistance is critical. We will follow-up on this. It's probably time to rewrite the cooperative agreement, and get both agencies to sign it.

### **Cornelius Gallagher - Bank of America**

I have some material for 1987 as an example of the kinds of charts and graphic display that sells very well to those who need 30-second answers. It's the concept of using charts and graphs and data consolidation in statistical presentations. How you present those numbers is important. Most of our organizations have the data units that can do today what was impossible to do a few short years ago. We want to present data correctly to have valid conclusions. The crisis that some people call the farm credit crisis, we honestly believe was largely a financial information crisis. We found that we didn't know the balance sheet, by and large, of farmers. Many of them did not know their cost of production. In fact, we talked to a number of different groups and they said that there is still a significant portion of farmers who do not know the cost of production for their operation or, more importantly, what it might be for a larger group. The University of Illinois samples 500 to 600 people in their study, yet there's disclaimers all over that say "we are just not sure this is right." I know one of your missions is protecting integrity and confidentiality and I know how important this information is to Iowa farmers and California farmers. They don't always want to tell you the truth because they don't know what you are going to do with the data. In fact, in the middle of the crisis, I asked for this kind of information from a group of California Agricultural leaders and they said "if you knew all that stuff, you would really be scared." I'll go back to that piece that you handed out which said what the first crop report contained, the acres sown in 1863 compared to 1862 and the conditions of the crops. That's real good. If we could get some of that basic stuff in a timely fashion and have something to compare and charts, like on consumption, anybody can figure out the trends. That's a good chart, that's the stuff of which decisions and corrections are made. Then they have the reality of what I call "what if?" I know all of you call it standard deviation and averages. I call it "what if?" The opportunity for it to go up or down. If we missed anything in the middle of the ag. credit crisis it's we didn't realize that this chart goes both ways. I think it is extremely important that as you put out this data, we see the high, low, and average in trend line for a number of years. I'd like to tell you what we look at -- we look at the acres, the yield, and the price. That's where you get gross income in this business. We need to look at the gross, and then we look at the cost of production. I'm flabbergasted with the lack of information in the cost of production that exists in United States agriculture. We can't produce a "Robert Morris Associates," report. This might be a foreign name to some of you, but that's a financial comparative firm that dumps all this financial information and compares different kinds of businesses to each other, like working capital and equity and net worth. I think we tend to focus on production and not a lot on the cost of production and maybe less on global marketing issues that I think are the heart of the Institute's question, this means global trends and acreages, etc., so that we can manage agriculture. The users also want good market information. If you can think about your future as marketing business information, I encourage you to do that. It is the basic data on the value of the financial statement of the U.S. farmer. I don't see the focus on income in most of the data and statistics. Last night, I was given a bottle of kiwi vinegar, that's not a very big market, but those users are just like the rest of us large data users. I hear them asking for market information as well. I guess we all realize that the biggest thing happening downtown is food safety. The biggest concern of the U.S. public is food safety. Part of that is good information to defend our position and make sure we can know where we stand. I don't know if you thought this should be given to consumer groups or used by the urban population. Your growers and producers in rural America have a serious need for some good agricultural education. A report released by the National Academy of Sciences about a month ago states that the U.S. population is agriculturally illiterate. My encouragement is that you help us with this social information so that we sell ourselves. We, here in California, are the safest producer of food and fiber in the world. We think we should have good information to come back

and say "you're wrong, we are safe, our food is safe, and we are not out here to maim your children and cause cancer in your aging population," that's our goal.

**Allen Johnson - ERS**

In your remarks about the food safety issue and the audience of that report, you talked about the outlets that we use for our situation and outlook work and that includes pieces like agricultural information poll. It's much shorter, punchier, and has a much broader audience than our Situation and Outlook report. Our Agricultural Outlook monthly magazine goes to a much broader audience including consumer groups. The National Food Review articles go out to food editors in major newspapers across the country. We do have a research program and an outlook program that targets both sides of the debate. On-farm finance, one of the follow-ons to the Census of Agriculture, is a Farm Finance Survey. We didn't have that follow-on in 1982. In retrospect, we probably should have but there was not institutional nor financial support for the survey, and it didn't happen. ERS is working with NASS to do more and better farm finance work with our Farm Costs and Returns Survey.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We will be doing costs of production surveys in California citrus next year. We have a series of cost of production surveys for agricultural commodities rotated over a 5-year period. There are some commodities that are mandated by law. They are wheat, corn, soybeans, hogs, and cattle. We are branching out to cover other commodities.

**Cornelius Gallagher - Bank of America**

A lot of information is there, but a lot of the users don't know how to get it. Many growers compare themselves to averages. We have tried to maintain data bases. What I find is most of them are about right. That doesn't make them wrong. We are going to be selling our growth, we want you to do financial forecasting in looking at your own history of cost of production and comparing that to something. I would expect growers to be looking at that more.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We do an annual Farm Costs and Return Survey with about 25,000 farmers. We are in the field doing that enumeration at this time. We will calculate, for some of those respondents, the profile of their farm compared with the averages of similar farms and provide that back to the growers. That would give them a comparison with what the other people in that survey are reporting. We don't want to keep any of the aggregated data secret from anyone. That should be available, we make great efforts so any potential user who needs it can get it. The confidentiality comes in since we must protect the data coming from an individual farm or farm business, but once it's aggregated into statistics we want to make them available to everyone. Someone talked about the need to present the data in a better format and thinks ERS is making great strides, in just the last year, putting some sharp, punchy pieces out. I think our own States are doing a better job in the publication of data. We just did an equine survey in the State of New Jersey. They combined the survey data with economic impact information on the horse industry in the State of New Jersey and created a very good summary report. That particular publication is getting wide acceptance outside agriculture because it is presented so attractively. We will try to do more of that. Computers do enable us to put more charts and graphs together; we are working on that too.



### **Chuck Brader - AMS**

I might say a couple words about your concern for the need for more social information, particularly in regards to food safety. Responsibility for food safety, at least in the area we are dealing with today, lies with the Food & Drug Administration in our Federal Government. We are certainly aware and want to cover ourselves with you in terms of our respective roles. We in the Agricultural Marketing Service do, on a voluntary basis, offer quality inspection for fruits and vegetables, but we don't usually get into these issues of safety that seem to be getting a great deal of public attention. First of all, it's a different kind of science that requires the identification of pesticides. We haven't been in that business, with one exception. The peanut industry has relied on us for about 20 years for detection of aflatoxin in peanuts. We do, paid by the peanut industry, look at every load of farmers stock peanuts and test peanut products for human consumption to guard the public against contamination. There is a precedence for USDA to provide that service on a voluntary basis, but that really is not our current area of responsibility, it's in the Food and Drug program. I think I heard last week that one of their Deputy Commissioners was on a forum in Washington and reiterated that food safety concerns lie more in the area of bacterial and biological toxins. Salmonella appears to be a much greater concern than the ones getting the press. When we have an opportunity to convey that message, we do, but for the most part we're in other kinds of business.

### **Stephen Heinrichs - Blue Diamond Growers**

In the case of the almond industry, we do have some geographical advantages in that all the U.S. almond production belongs to the California area. Because we are under a market order, we have a lot of data available. The almond industry grew rapidly during the period of the late 1970's and early 1980's, and our data got a little bit questionable because they only had so much staff. However, I would say the acreage data, at this point, have pretty well caught up. It's that acreage data that provides the basis for crop estimates which is the basis for our planning of proper marketings. It takes the trees a while to start bearing, so once they stick the tree in the ground, we have about 4 years to find it and get it recorded before it has an effect. Our challenge in the coming years is to keep up with new plantings. Our marketing order has multiple aspects, it has production research, quality control, advertising promotion, and volume control. All of those require data. When it gets to the projections of the demand side rather than the production side, that's when we really get into census data because in the case of almonds, 60 percent is exported. On the demand side, we are more dependent upon what is going on in Japan and Europe. The problem is not the data collection domestically. Our weak point is data collection outside of the U.S. On the production side, the second largest producer is Spain, followed by Portugal. With California producing 60 percent of the world production and Spain about 20 percent, it doesn't leave much for the rest of the world. There is no data collection system for almond production in Spain. There is no government crop forecast; the only information is for 15 years ago, so we started sending people over there to take a look at the crop. Over the years, it's developed where Spanish marketers call us to find out the size of the Spanish crop. This is the lack of information that exists in other areas, and it shows how important it is if those people are calling us. I was very enthused about the concept of having some of these data bases available on floppy disks because you can make so many reports and put it together so many ways and put it together the way that the majority wants it. Sometimes you need to put data together in a different way and you look at time series data. You will make a better decision sometime with better analytical ability. Data we particularly use are on the production side for filberts (hazelnuts), pecans, peanuts, and walnuts, particularly FAS information on hazelnuts produced in Brazil. We are really putting together data that covers not only ag. sectors but all of the rest of it as well.

### **Charles Caudill - NASS**

It is easier to produce statistics on California because it is such a relatively small geographic area. That's often true of all our specialty commodities. It is easier for the Florida citrus people to band together to tax themselves to pay for the statistics, which they do because it is such a concentrated area. We have increased industry support, but it's very hard for small, dispersed groups to come up with money. The hop producers recognize the need for some data; they are cooperating with us and giving us a little bit of money to provide them with statistics that would be very hard for us to justify from a national viewpoint. The mink industry did obtain a small federal appropriation. From the standpoint of the total agricultural picture in the country it's not something we can defend very strongly--that we should continue to do a mink survey--although it's a very easy thing for us to do since the cooperation with the industry is excellent.

### **Frank Mosebar - Dried Fruit Association**

The dried fruit and tree nut industry in California is pretty much all of it in the United States. The data we need are probably mostly in the international market. We get a lot of information on that, but the things we are concerned about is getting information on developing issues. It's difficult to get that, I know. But something like the information on the latest war with Europe on the market, there's a lot of misinformation going around on that. The things that we are concerned about are not the data we get but the concern is if we are getting all the reports on issues that maybe we need. What is happening in Turkey and what is happening in some of the Mediterranean countries that are in direct competition. One thing I would like to recommend is that there is some sort of report of those that attended; addresses and telephone numbers.

### **Bill Martinet - Sunkist Growers**

It has been our experience with our membership at Sunkist that they are concerned with what is happening worldwide. We need to know what the competition is all about. We still export about 35 percent of our production, but we certainly are short of import data such as on the soft fruits coming from Chile. I guess NASS Agricultural Statistics Board reports on the 10th of the month, that provides U.S. forecasts, got us used to getting our data on a regimented basis. When we moved to FAS reports, there was no structure, no timing. When we work with you, it's very structured, we know when we are going to get the data, we know when we are going to get the crop forecasts, then we start to move to other sources of information. The two are almost incompatible. Our navel orange marketings today are certainly tremendously different from what they were 10 years ago. We need to know what the projections of plantings will be. If there is anything California can do, because of the diverse nature of our State in the area of photography and other things, please let us know.

Finally, getting into some specific technical things as far as grapefruit. If you look at the State estimate for California, you break it out between summer and other areas. The Florida estimate is either in the color white or pink. It's somewhat inconsistent that we are going geographic in California and they are going by color in Florida. I think we can give you some data to be consistent in that reporting. For example, the reporting of the forecast in boxes. There is no such thing as a box in the industry. We use a 37 1/2 lb. carton out here in California which is half the size of the U.S. box. That's fine until I start communicating with management. We still have the education process with management. It causes a lot of confusion. Two other issues would be the mailing lists, and again we get to the cost of production questionnaire. We at Sunkist internally have our own mailing list of our growers, and we try to match up with what the State has on the mailing list. The final issue is the staff turnover. Dave Kleweno and Tom McNair have been working with the Orange Industry on the objective measurement survey, for 3 years now, and it's critical to keep them on the program until it's more mature. We need continuity. I know Washington moves people around to get experience, but it is also important to keep the continuity.



**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We share in a number of those concerns, such as the mailing list we call our list sampling frame. In 1978, we received a \$4.3 million annual appropriation to keep that frame up-to-date. We have 2 million farms, and at present we only have about 1.2 million farms on that list although we have close to 2 million names. Because things change almost every day, it is difficult to keep up. Since 1980, we have lost 250 people, 75 of them were originally given to us to keep that mailing list up-to-date. Every year the list changes by at least 25 percent. If you let it go for a year, you get behind and you almost never catch up. The standard box is an issue. I think we have pretty much gone along with the citrus growers in the other States. We realize there is no such thing as standard box, and we publish at least three or four different sizes of boxes. I believe at the end of the season, we do convert everything to tons so that we have some standard for comparison.

**Robert Addison - NASS**

We do issue the forecast each month in boxes and we do have different box weights for several States. Florida has been talked to about this in the past, and it is my understanding that they are the ones standing in the way of a common conversion of some kind. They have been using a 90-pound field box in Florida for a number of years. They claim that is what the industry is accustomed to, and they don't want to change to anything else. If you satisfy some of the desires here, you would have to publish two estimates each month. One in boxes, and one in a common unit of some kind until some other solution could be reached. We have approached them once, we can approach them again to see if they feel differently. We realize there is a problem, that's why we convert everything to tons at the end of the year and publish it in the annual citrus publication. Bill would you prefer that we publish colors in California and the breakout by geographic areas?

**Bill Martinet - Sunkist Growers**

The color is so important to marketing information. California needs it.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

They do tax citrus by the box in Florida to pay for citrus statistics; we don't want to do anything to jeopardize that.

**Don Bay - NASS**

On the personnel changeover issue, sometimes we have to put the future of the employee and his opportunity for advancement into play.

**Bill Johnson - California Canning Peach Association**

We are concerned with the Cold Storage report. The stocks of frozen peaches appear to be inaccurate for the past 2-3 years.

Apparently, 3 years ago, my boss expressed the opinion that the number was okay and he felt pretty confident in it, but now it has gotten to the point where it's hard to believe. We just want to look into how it comes about.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We will be happy to look into it. There are no reports we put out that can't be improved. We try to continually review all reports; if we find something wrong, we correct it and tell you about the corrections.

**Don Bay - NASS**

That probably is the report that bothers me the most when it comes out, because it affects the market for so many different commodities in one release. We have to reevaluate how we currently do it. What we end up with is a few key cold storage facilities in each State. The State that is working with the report may not recognize the importance of the individual plants, because we make only national and regional estimates. We are constantly running into problems, and they keep shifting to different commodities. We do recognize the fact that we have to do something to try to increase the accuracy of the Cold Storage report, because it does have a tremendous value to the industry as a source of information on what supplies are for their commodities.

**Mark Hays - Paramount Citrus**

My concerns are to have a standard unit of measure between California and Florida. Other concerns are pesticide residue and whether reports have been issued on residue levels on incoming fruits from Chile and Mexico in comparison to domestic production so that we may be able to educate the consumer. The volumes of Chilean imports, what's the volume?

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

AMS is doing some work on imports in Florida, dealing with the Caribbean Basin. Also, I think I heard they were doing something with reporting Chilean imports.

**Chuck Brader - AMS**

Two years ago, with a specific objective of tracking Caribbean Basin imports, we established a Miami office to provide daily and weekly and then an annual summary of information on supplies and prices. On Chile, we do a daily report out of our New York City office, not that that is the principal import point but New York is the office at the moment tracking that information. We have daily, weekly, and annual information on Chilean imports as to price and volume. We do a good job on capturing all Chilean import data. We report shipments and arrivals in terms of volume. On arrivals, we record information for 23 cities. It is valuable for trend purposes.

**Art Verissimo - California Market News**

The information that's put out in New York, we include in our fruit report. We have dock prices for both Philadelphia and Los Angeles. We also show the boats that are coming in from Chile and the number of containers by commodity, so we do have some of that information included in our citrus fruit report. We don't generate it here, we pick it up from the New York releases.

**Chuck Brader - AMS**

The Food and Drug Administration does inspections on pesticide residues. They have, on occasion, reported comparisons on residues between the domestic and imported fruit.



# DATA USERS MEETING

Portland, Oregon

March 9, 1989

**Susan Blosser - Oregon Wine Grower's Association**

One of the largest trade magazines called "Wines and Vines" comes out every year with a survey of the grape and wine industry in the United States. They publish statistics on the U.S. grape crop in the major producing States, and they have about eight that are included but Oregon is not one of them. We have a larger production than probably half of the States on the survey. We are a new industry. We are in the premium wine business and not in the bulk wine, so we are only a small fragment of the grape industry. We feel Oregon should be represented and hope that you will consider taking the statistics that we have at the State level and putting them as a separate breakout in the USDA statistical reports.

**Robert Addison - NASS**

We don't, as you say, have Oregon in the estimates program at the Federal level. We often times have requests to add various things to the program. We usually reevaluate the States included every 5 years. If the data are available already and new funds are not required to collect the data, then there's a good possibility it can be added.

**Susan Blosser - Oregon Wine Grower's Association**

My understanding is that the data are available, is that true or false?

**Paul Williamson - NASS, Portland, Oregon**

Currently, for the last 2 years anyway, the industry paid to collect the State data and it is available. Before that, Stan Miles down at Oregon State had collected some data.

**Susan Blosser - Oregon Wine Grower's Association**

The second thing that I think I need to make clear is that I'm pretty sure that the Oregon production is a small percent of the national production. One of the reasons for that is that we don't cover the whole wine market. We are in the very top premium section of the wine market, in terms of premium wines, and I'm sure we are becoming important.

**Robert Addison - NASS**

As far as my group goes, we would have no problem adding Oregon to the program whether or not they account for a small percent, as long as the data's available.

**Susan Blosser - Oregon Wine Grower's Association**

Can I go back to the Oregon Wine Grower's Association and report that when the 1989 crop estimates come out that you will have broken out Oregon as one of the major grape-producing States?

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

Let us take a look at what Paul's got and we will get back to you within the next 6 weeks. That's an easy, reasonable request and we will do whatever we can to honor that.

{Editorial Note: The wine industry has agreed to provide funding for the 1989 vineyard survey. The survey will be conducted during the fall and Oregon data published in the U.S. report.}

**Richard Betz - Oregon/California Potato Committee**

Come up with a better refining of how to identify potatoes and maybe their end-usage.

**Robert Addison - NASS**

We had requests to report only marketable potatoes. Our North Dakota office requested that we allow them to try that in North Dakota, on an experimental basis, because of potato growers' requests. We authorized them to do a survey for 1988. The results of the survey there were not very good. We found out that growers who had storage facilities could not estimate the amount of potatoes that were going to be marketed at the end of the year. It appears that if you have a normal storage season, where shrinkage is about normal, they are able to make good estimates. If the season is abnormal, most people seem to underestimate the amount of shrinkage; and that's the way it turned out last year. If it proves over a period of time that grower/storage operators can't accurately estimate the amount of potatoes to be marketed out of their own cellars, I don't know if it would be reasonable for us to try it at the national level. We'll see how it turns out the second year. The thing that we have to worry about is cooperation, we know that potato prices are sensitive. I can summarize by saying that we are doing that experiment again in North Dakota this year, and we will see how it turns out.

**Don Bay - NASS**

If we shrink this year's crop, we will also have to shrink last year's and previous year's crops. The comparisons will probably be a very similar, up 2 percent or down 3 percent. We do need to keep data comparable, so it's not just changing this year's but other year's too.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We will be glad to take a look at that. We will also report the results of the North Dakota work and look at the possibility of estimating acreage by contract. We will talk to the people who we collect these data from and see what's possible.

**Rick Stevenson - Oregon Farm Bureau Federation**

The Farm Labor Survey needs to be conducted more often. We sit on the Governor's Task Force for Immigration Reform, the Committee who evaluated the impact of the Immigration Reform Control Act. One of the concerns expressed by the Committee was that the report should come out as often as eight times a year. Another concern was that if it was regionalized that Oregon not only be included with Washington as a region but include California, because it is important to us what is going on in California as well as some of the other Western States. We also want to see sampling errors, if at all possible. In my job, I handle the market information service that we make available to our members. I am always interested in expanding the number of reports, in this area, that these producers can receive. I have dealt with Paul many times trying to explore or trying to find out where these reports are generated. It's an ongoing situation, and many farmers are able to tell me that they receive a newsletter such as you mentioned this morning. If we can track down where that report is generated, as I understand we can have the people in Washington make it available. Your assistance in this regard would be appreciated. Any way that we can help in getting this information out or assist you in getting this information out to our producers is welcome. Recently, I had some interns from Oregon State do a preliminary study on what it would take to report the grass seed industry market prices; and I had a discussion with Paul about this, and I think we mentioned that something of this nature was done in the past. I know that these people are interested; it's a complex commodity to deal with, and the way it's marketed is not necessarily a science at this point in time. In our survey, producers, growers, processors, and shippers expressed an interest in being able to report on this. We looked into the feasibility of our organization doing it; but I found it interesting that there are many organizations that fund the



USDA for doing this kind of reporting, and I think it would be much more feasible that way. The USDA is looked upon as a very independent source of information, and we might want to pursue that.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

You are probably aware that we did estimate field grass seeds and vegetable seeds for many years until 1982 when budget cuts forced us to drop all of that. I think the main issue that I am aware of in the grass seed industry would be whether or not there is fairly broad industry support. That would be the prime factor for putting that kind of reporting system back in and getting some funding to do that work. I might point out, Paul can do a lot of these things for just the actual out-of-pocket costs. On the other hand, nationally, our staff has been reduced by 20 percent. My guess is that the Oregon office has been reduced by more than that. So, the number of people to physically handle the current number of crops and products that are growing in Oregon has got to be putting a tremendous strain on Paul's office. If we had the funding, we could go after additional employees. We will be glad to consider that; and we know the farm labor problem, and we documented it for your Senators.

**Robert Addison - NASS**

After the seed estimates were discontinued in the spring of 1982, I met with the American Seed Trade Association a couple times. We talked about what it would cost to reinstate those estimates. There was no unified national support to do that. As I recall, the price was pretty high. It was about \$200 thousand to reinstate the entire program as it existed before it was discontinued, and that would be for all States not just Oregon. After we talked money, they did not come back for any more talks. It would be possible to maybe do end-of-season estimates for less than the \$200 thousand, but the meat of the whole story was there was no broad national support for it at the time that we talked to them.

**Pete Naumes - Fruit Growers League**

We understand the budget concerns but the government has saddled agriculture with this immigration thing, and I think that both we and you need to put the pressure to make it so we can live with the critter. If agriculture can't live with the program the thing is going to come apart at the seams, and the USDA and INS are going to be left with egg on their face.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We need to reform the Reform Act.

**Paul Williamson - NASS, Portland, Oregon**

Talking about regions, would you want to combine Oregon, Washington, and California for just wage rate data?

**Rick Stevenson - Oregon Farm Bureau Federation**

Not necessarily, just wages. As I understand it, it's done nationally now, but could the data be broken down into regions or by State?

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We do publish the Oregon data combined with Washington because we don't have a sample size in either State large enough to publish the State data separately. We combined the two States to essentially double the sample size so the estimates are statistically reliable. California is published separately because their sample size is large enough for reliable estimates at the State level. Fred, what's the sample size in California compared to Oregon?

**Fred Thorp - NASS**

California has a sample size of about 1,400, while in Oregon and Washington probably about 300. It would be 600 to 700 combined between the two States.

**Tom Winn - Oregon Wheat Commission**

In compilation of your statistics on white wheat, I would appreciate and I know my counterparts in Washington and Idaho also would appreciate, having a little better breakout on the ending stocks for white wheat. For example, what's in the farmer-owned reserve, what's in CCC inventory, and free stocks. One thing we are constantly struggling with is having a good handle on good free stock numbers. There seems to be a discrepancy of somewhere in the neighborhood of 30 million bushels, depending on who you talk to now.

**Paul Williamson - NASS, Portland, Oregon**

When the World Agricultural Outlook Board puts that information out, they put out all the breakdown you need for all wheat, but when they break into classes, they reduce the number of breakdowns. It would be very helpful to the white wheat industry out here if they could break the white wheat the same as all wheat.

**Don Bay - NASS**

World Agricultural Outlook Board uses the varieties grown by States to estimate breakouts between the various classes of wheat. It is something that could be done. In States that grow a number of varieties, it becomes a job. States that grow mostly one variety, of course, it wouldn't be that much of a job.

**Tom Winn - Oregon Wheat Commission**

I think in the Northwest it would be pretty easy to do. It would sure help us out.

**Don Bay - NASS**

If we did it in the Northwest, though, we probably would have to change and do it by all the classes, because there's definitely distinct markets for soft wheat and hard wheat. This has been talked about but again it comes to a funding situation. If we can do something that would help without much extra cost, we will pursue it.

**Arden Sheets - Washington County Extension Office**

I would like to know if there is any publication that has per capita consumption of various products? Recently, I was looking for the per capita consumption on popcorn. I was wondering if there is a listing anywhere of that? If not, can you tell me where to find that information?

**Jim Johnson - ERS**

It's available through the NASS/ERS order desk. Ask for "Food Consumption, Prices, and Expenditures" report. There will be a floppy disk to go with that report, that will be available shortly.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

My guess, you are not going to find any popcorn consumption data. We had to drop popcorn production out of the program in 1982.

**Norbert Kinen - Oregon Nurserymen Association**

We are concerned in the Oregon Nursery Industry with the prevailing wage that hinders using the H-2A program. It's impossible for us to use that wage, over \$5, it certainly does not reflect what's paid in the Oregon industry. We're an employer, I'm with the Association, but I also work for a company. We employ nearly 500, and that certainly doesn't match our wages. I think we are



quite competitive in the labor area. I heard you say we are grouped together with Washington because of the small sample size. There's quite a bit of difference in the economy between Oregon and Washington, and I don't know whether it's going to show up in prevailing wages but it does show up in real estate. Washington is more comparable to California. You have to look really hard to find a house that's more than \$150,000 in this area. That's pretty much the top of the line. Down in California, a house goes for \$250,000 to \$350,000. If you could make separate estimates for Washington and Oregon it would be helpful. The Oregon industry has expanded tremendously, and the nursery industry has an expanded need for workers. To give you an example -- over the long weekend of President's Day, we had 81 false copy checks supplied against our payroll account. They were copy checks, they were not our checks, they were stolen checks. They were done so well that the people who normally cash them at their local markets, kept on cashing them. There are forged papers out there, and all we have to do is look at those papers. If they can do a good check, they can sure do a good "A" number on that. I believe you are not checking your computers against whether they are good "A" numbers or not, is that correct?

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

They will be checked back against the INS identification numbers. That's the plan right now. If two people use the same "A" number and one of them is illegal, it's still going to match. We will only be checking on the "A" number itself. Labor may, for enforcement purposes where a duplicate "A" number shows up a number of times, actually follow it up on a name basis. Department of Labor, Wage & Hour Division, has the enforcement activity.

**Norbert Kinen - Oregon Nurserymen Association**

I don't think there is statistical data being collected on the nursery industry on a national basis, and there certainly is not much on the Oregon industry. The only kind of information that we have on the nursery industry is a magazine. How they gather their information, we are not certain. They list the top 100 nursery businesses in the United States. They listed this past year that those 100 businesses represented \$4 billion worth of business. In 1980 it was \$2 1/2 billion, so you can see a certain amount of growth going on in the nursery industry. We are not sure what the growth is and where it is all happening. In that same survey, Oregon in 1981 listed 7th, last year we were listed 4th in the nation in the amount of business. We certainly could use information on the amount of products that is being produced, where it is being consumed across the country. In Oregon, we are propagating nursery products a little bit different than some other States; although, we are competing with States across the United States. We have no feedback as to supply and demand, as to pricing, and changes in trends in different types of products. We are faced here in the future with the greenhouse effect. We are getting orders because of the greenhouse effect. We have no way of telling which way production is going, whether it is being increased or not. We need to look at how supply and demand is going. It is somewhat of a problem, because the nursery industry is diverse in kinds of products.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

You are right, there is no national program of statistics on the nursery industry. There have been a few periodic State surveys, in most cases, paid for by the industry in that State.

**Robert Addison - NASS**

We publish information on floriculture, but not about nursery products. In addition to this, the Census Bureau is in the process of conducting a 1988 Horticulture Specialty Survey. This is the first one done since 1979. That survey does collect some data on nursery products. Other than that, there are no data that exists in the country on nursery products. About a year ago, we got a call inviting us to attend the annual meeting of Nursery

Products Association. We asked the leaders of the nursery industry attending this meeting if they wanted a survey covering nursery products and their response was negative. To do a survey, we would have to have national support.

**Grafton Pauls - Washington State Wool Growers**

We, especially the wool growers, are having a problem with the predators. We are asking for a survey of losses from predators. We would like to see that survey on a State-by-State basis throughout the Western portions of the United States. Predation losses cost \$1,000,748 primarily due to the coyote. I would like to see a survey be sent out to a list of sheep producers and cattle producers. We would like to see it done nationally, but at least for the Western States. Figures are available for Idaho, but we have no figures in Washington. As I understand it, there are only 5 States that have a survey on predations.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

To my knowledge, all the surveys that have been done have been paid for at the State level, either by the State Department of Agriculture or the producer groups. Explore that with Doug Hasslen in Washington. If it can be a simple add-on to the January 1 Sheep and Lamb Survey, it probably can be done for a minimum cost. We would certainly be willing to support that. We have a very complete list of sheep producers since NASS obtains ASCS list of producers who file for wool incentive payments.

**W. W. Dewitt - Wenatchee Valley Traffic Association**

The AMS reports, as far as apples are concerned, are all reported in pounds. About 75 percent of the industry is in the fresh market, and every industry report that is put out is reported in 42-pound boxes. We would very much like to see your reports changed. Our people, who get your reports, usually don't have time to convert your figures from pounds back to boxes. Most of the industry does use the per box.

**Charles Brader - AMS**

I understand your perspective and it may be an appropriate time to again review that issue. I suspect that we could maintain the pound unit for national reports, because it stays the same year-after-year. In local reports, I don't see why it can't be changed to the unit the industry prefers.

**Robert Gelhar - Filbert/Hazelnut Marketing Board**

We do subscribe to the Dried Fruit & Nut report, which has a lot of information about various production in the dried fruit industry. That report is put out by Market News and the California Department of Food and Agriculture. It does have import information in it, but many times that import information is incorrect. It is incorrect, because if you compute the value that they show with the type of product that they show, you could see that it can't be hazelnuts. We pointed this out to their field office one time. It gets to where you find errors like this in reports and you become less willing to accept even the things that you can compute out in the report.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

Should we stop saying filberts and say hazelnuts?

**Robert Gelhar - Filbert/Hazelnut Marketing Board**

The industry would like you to.

**Stan Miles - Oregon State University**

As far as I can tell, no estimates are made by the National Agricultural Statistics Service on about \$750 million (or about one-third) worth of Oregon's \$2.3 billion annual agricultural sales. These



things have been mentioned. The grass and field seed industry which I have at \$230 million for last year, nursery and greenhouse at \$210 million, christmas trees at over \$50 million, and there are lots of small items. I know you can't deal with all the Oregon specialty crops, but I think it's time to get back in to making some kind of estimate on turf grass. It is time to make some stab at the nursery business and christmas trees.

**Stephen Naught - Washington Barley Commission**

How do you determine your sample size? Second thing is, do you also look at geographical areas? It is very critical that production be properly represented by geographic areas.

**Don Bay - NASS**

We take a very large percentage of the people who buy grain in this State. We do rotate those people. When a person is selected in that sample for 12 months, we ask them to report the total dollars paid and the total bushels purchased on the grains that they buy. We feel we need to give the people some relief after a year of reporting. The larger buyers of grain have a higher probability of being selected, but we do rotate everyone. The elevators are not necessarily sorted by geographic areas within a sample selected area formed by geographic division. We can look at possibly putting in some type of geographic restriction or sort before we made the selections that would guarantee that we had a well distributed sample.

**Fred Thorp - NASS**

In some States, we do take geographic regions but basically we are sampling from the universe of elevators. In a State like Kansas or Nebraska where your State varies in the crops produced (Kansas you have soybeans and corn in the eastern third and largely wheat) and you sample the elevators by the size distribution, you would be at a very poor sample for corn and soybeans. In that case, we do separate out by geographic regions. In a few cases where there's specialty-type firms that buy only one commodity, we treat them independently also.

**Stephen Naught - Washington Barley Growers Association**

I think our concern is when determining the farm-gate price, you back it off of these elevators. Just in our State alone, we can go .50 cents a bushel, just a difference on grade rate. That's what we get nervous about.

**Fred Thorp - NASS**

But with the volume we cover, we think that it should be well represented. Now back before we went to the probability survey it was a different situation. Each elevator had the same weight and that could lead you to the type of problems you are talking about.

**Robin Jones - Washington State Department of Agriculture**

I'll give you a couple of facts. The U.S. horse industry says it is a \$15 billion business annually. This money is spent by over 1,050,000 owners who maintain over 5.2 million equine. In comparison, this industry is equal to 83 percent of the gross national product of textile mill products sector and 65 percent of the lumber and wood products sector. So, it's equal to the combined output of that and other land product industries. Horses are not just a hobby. In Washington State alone, half a million dollars a year are spent on Washington horses and that doesn't include purchasing them, etc. A couple of reasons why we need an accurate equine survey is there isn't a good handle on the number of equine and people involved independently on a national level. The figures I gave you are from the American Horse Council Survey in 1987, and they acknowledge that that number is low as far as they don't really have a very good sampling number. It's too small

to be as accurate as it could have been. The American Horse Council Survey isn't broken down for every State, and individual States do need these figures in a lot of different ways. In some States, they are documenting the economic impact of the equine industry and putting these figures in proportion to other segments of the industries in the State. We need to have the State Department of Agriculture look at horses as an ag. commodity. It's a gray area because they are recreation and entertainment animals but they are agriculture when you look at the impact. They consumed 21 percent of all the hay grown in Washington State. Health officials need an accurate number of horses in order to order vaccines in case of disease. We need to have a count of equine owners for tax purposes. The biggest problem we have in the equine industry is that people don't want to acknowledge that they are selling horses and not pay sales tax on it. Doug Hasslen has told me that the one minor detail with all of this was the cost of the equine survey. I guess the list is the big cost, but you can get a base sample by working with the State and with the industry as 27 States have State Horse Councils. So you can get thousands of names from those people, and also you can utilize colleges with extension services to create macro mailing lists.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

You're right, the cost is the major factor. A number of States have done this. We just finished a survey in New Jersey that was funded by the State Department of Agriculture and the Horse Industry. That particular survey only showed 60,000 horses in the State of New Jersey, but the economic impact of that industry is between 3 and 4 billion dollars. The New Jersey horse industry representatives and the State Commissioner of Agriculture have indicated the \$140,000 that the survey cost was well worth it, and all the States should fund a similar survey. The Tennessee legislature has just appropriated funds to begin doing an annual horse survey in Tennessee. Since many horses are not on farms today, we have to sample city population and suburban areas, and that is what makes it so expensive. There is no single source that can provide a complete list of those raising or keeping horses. List development work is not cheap. We maintain a list of farms that includes about 1.8 million names. New Jersey worked a good 8 to 10 months to build their horse list before they attempted to do the survey. In addition to Tennessee, there are some other States planning horse surveys, but in every case it is funded at the State level. We have talked to the National Horse Council about doing a national survey. They did go to Congress but were not successful in obtaining the necessary appropriation. Our prospects for increased funding in many States and at the Federal level is remote, given the budget situation.

**Robert Sargent - WSU Cooperative Extension**

I wonder if there might be some better way of getting a handle on what the on-farm grain stocks are? They cause the need for some pretty sharp adjustments in production or use, in order to get things to balance. I sometimes wonder if we have a good enough handle on what the on-farm stocks are. I recognize the off-farm stocks are based on a nearly complete survey of the population.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

It's one of the toughest things to estimate that we do. The kinds of reporting errors that one can encounter, how to define it, who owns it, where it's at. It is a problem and we are working on it and doing a lot of quality control work to follow-up on that survey.

**Don Bay - NASS**

One of the problems when you work the U.S. balance sheet is that whatever error there might be in the beginning stocks (carryover), production, and disappearance gets accumulated and can cause the current stocks numbers to appear wrong when the error might be in one or more of those other estimates. Recent quality follow-up work has been



very helpful to measure reporting errors. After adjusting for these errors, the on-farm stocks survey looks very good in comparison to the balance sheets. I think we are moving in the right direction.

**Wes Sloulin - Stone Fruit Marketing Committee**

We have formally requested in the past that NASS consider separating prunes and plums for the sake of reporting your estimates. As of this date, that has not occurred. The standing motion has been ongoing for probably 6 or 7 years. I think that we are really talking about 4 States here, probably. Those two numbers are lumped together, one is Michigan and the others are Oregon, Idaho, and Washington. I know I can speak for at least three of those States. The numbers are reported to NASS separately. It seems to be a little odd that they can not be reported in the summaries that way. I would encourage you to consider separating those two items, if that is at all possible.

The second thing I would like to talk about is the tree census. I think the one done in 1985 was extremely helpful to our industry. I would encourage that we do that on a regular basis. I can not speak for what the industry considers as far as funding.

The last thing I want to address involves market news. I would suggest timeliness, if there is anyway we could get those reports closer to the end of the season.

**Robert Addison - NASS**

I can't tell you why we combine them. We do publish plums and prunes separately in California. In view of the fact that we do it for California, I see no reason why we can't do it in the other States, especially since the data seems to be available. We do need to talk to the other four States. If they are willing to do it and if the data are there or if the data can be collected at minimum expense, we would certainly be willing to go ahead. I think there is a good possibility that we could do that.

**Robert Hansen - Idaho & Eastern Oregon Potato Committee**

Stocks on hand would be nice to have; the what's committed and what's uncommitted, as far as under contract and open.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

That was requested in the letter they gave me.

{Editorial Note: A response was sent to Mr. Hansen. The National Potato Council discussed this with NASS in January 1989. It appears that growers are in favor of this, but processors and some members of the National Potato Council oppose it. This makes it difficult because processors own a large amount of the stock in storage each month.}

**Tom Cooper - Federal State Market News Service**

Why does the first acreage report of the season for the summer and fall potato crops come out on the same day? We get frequent questions as to why the summer crop first acreage report is so delayed. Often our crop marketing is well under way before the first acreage report ever comes out. Is there any good reason why that summer crop first acreage report is so late?

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We can take a look at it. If it's what Bob was suggesting, that it's a cost factor, we already have a survey in the field for a lot of other things, and it is easier to do the summer acreage on that same survey. I'm not familiar with the background of why we do it that way either.

{Editorial Note: A response was sent to Mr. Cooper. Summer and fall potato acreage have always been released together in late June or early July. There is no data collection vehicle that would make it possible to publish the summer acreage separately in the early June Crop Production report, unless we initiated new surveys in each of the 16 States involved. The industry has never felt the need for an earlier estimate of summer acreage, since the fall crop is an extension of the summer crop in several States. For example, fall potatoes are harvested in Oregon before the summer crop is harvested in Virginia.}



## **DATA USERS MEETING**

**Lansing, Michigan**

**March 14, 1989**

### **Manuel Gonzalez - Office of Migrant Services, MDSS**

I'm concerned about the selection of only 4 sample weeks to be included in Farm Labor Surveys. The statistics will be affected by the weeks used, and they may not pick up the peak weeks for field work in Michigan. A concern I have is if you release one estimate for the whole nation it may have a negative impact on our State, particularly in comparison with Oregon, Texas, and California.

### **Don Bay - NASS**

The regular survey is designed to measure changes in farm employment and wage rates throughout the year and from year-to-year. Therefore, the same weeks are used as for Department of Labor surveys. The surveys are not designed to estimate peak workers. This year, questions have been added to the July survey to measure economic losses (due to lack of labor) for the entire past year.

### **Robert Craig - Michigan Farm Bureau**

Since 1988 was the year of great drought, including that year might underestimate total need for labor. Will you be making some adjustment to allow for these abnormal conditions.

### **Robert Coltrane - ERS**

One of the adjustments to "need" that is specified is to account for expected changes in production from year-to-year, so 1988 data can be adjusted.

### **Allen Shapley - Michigan State University**

Extension Service is supposed to be one of the organizations responsible for informing farmers of the mandatory ES-92 reporting program. I have observed that many farmers do not know of the program or do not understand it. I think that the Immigration and Naturalization Service did a good job of spreading the word on the I-9 requirements. If the number of ES-92 forms filed is too low, does that mean that the number of Replacement Agricultural Workers (RAW) will be too high?

### **Robert Coltrane - ERS**

The divisor in the RAW calculations is not total workers but is average days per person reported, so the data might still be acceptable.

### **Howard Kelly - Michigan Farm Bureau**

The explanation this morning has confirmed concerns he had about the RAW program. Establishing only one figure for the United States may be useless for Michigan. The right number of people may be brought into the country, but they may never make it to Michigan.

I would like to emphasize the need for Michigan data on wage rates. Michigan is a highly unionized State, and wage rates are likely different than for Minnesota and Wisconsin in the same region.

Another concern is the fact that the definition, that only unpaid workers who work 15 hours or more are counted, must result in underestimation of total labor used.

The recent debates in Michigan on field sanitation regulation demonstrated the need for more State farm labor data. Both sides went to the Michigan Ag. Statistics office for help. The main data available were from the 1982 Census of Agriculture which were not sufficient.

**Don Bay - NASS**

NASS has had requests from many other States for State level data. NASS would separate any State level figures which can be supported statistically. To go to total State level data would take a total sample size of about 60,000 instead of the present 15,000.

**Manuel Gonzalez - Office of Migrant Services, MDSS**

The Immigration Reform and Control Act did not define the minimum age of workers which should be used. The USDA uses 12 years and over for some purposes. However, often times, family groups are working together. Farmers may only report workers 16 years old and over. This would underestimate numbers of workers and hours but would overestimate piece rate conversions.

**Don Bay - NASS**

Statistical agencies have to rely on what individuals report. We don't try to exclude any workers, but we can re-examine the definitions provided to respondents.

**Beverly Barringer - Michigan Employment Security Commission**

Do NASS officers have access to data from State agencies which are provided to the U.S. Department of Labor?

**Rich Allen - NASS**

All NASS surveys involve State offices conducting surveys, summarizing data, and making recommendations which are reviewed in Headquarters before publication. Offices will collect all supporting data they can find in making recommendations. Many State surveys provide only limited support, since they may not cover the same survey period or may include only a portion of all workers.

**Ray Schaub - National Corn Growers Association**

How much data will the USDA be able to use from the ASCS form which all farm program participants are required to fill out on total labor needs?

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

We are not familiar with that form or the ASCS purpose of requesting it, but many farmers raising program crops are not major hired labor users.

{Editorial Note: It was determined later that the form referenced is only asking total labor input as one step to determine if the person filing is making a proper contribution to the operation. It will not provide any total labor expansions.}

**Gerald Deer - Michigan Employment Security Commission**

Will USDA use data available from Census or from INS Border Patrol on labor shortages this year?

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

The reported ES-92 data on workers used will be matched against INS files to identify which portions of work are by SAW and RAW workers.



**Allen Shapley - Michigan State University**

My concern is that while Michigan did not use many illegal workers in the past but used primarily Texas citizens, many of those people might take jobs formerly done by illegals in Texas and therefore not come to Michigan.

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

There is no good mechanism to measure that in the short run. Department of Labor will track SAW's and other workers moving out of agriculture over time.

**Camille Valley - Iowa Department of Agriculture**

We are trying to build up a data base for Iowa specialty commodities. We track data from five terminal markets but are concerned that from the descriptions provided, data doesn't seem comparable. The packs reported from different markets seem so variable that we would like guidance on how to standardize units.

**Chuck Brader - AMS**

Agricultural Marketing Service is trying to work on uniformity when they can, but they serve clientele who have many different needs. We are investing considerable resources for a national data base system, and that in itself will require greater uniformity.

**Charles Hackensmith - AMS**

AMS has found there are often too many variables to fully standardize. St. Louis and Detroit get packs during the year from many different places, including local shippers who use unusual packs.

**Dan Cooper - Iowa Department of Agriculture**

There is not enough information on specialty commodities for States like Iowa which is trying to promote new production. They are hoping to get the Iowa NASS office money for horticulture specialty statistics.

**Jim Krone - Roses, Inc.**

Government agencies need to provide additional information when changes in survey procedures or survey coverage are made. The Floriculture Surveys conducted in 1988 and 1989 have covered more operations than before but the data collected in 1988 were not matched to earlier years on an identical basis. This caused some misinterpretations. NASS did go back and create some identical indications to answer some specific rose questions.

I am concerned that the floriculture industry has a lot of unused capacity. Perhaps that should be measured in future surveys.

**Don Bay - NASS**

NASS is attempting to make the relationships between the current year and the previous year more comparable by having our State offices collect previous year data as well as current year whenever they add a new operation. Hopefully, by revising 1987 estimates when NASS issues the 1988 data this will satisfy the need for more reasonable measures of change.

If proper questions can be developed to measure accurately unused capacity, NASS will be happy to consider adding them on future surveys.

**Tom Butler - MACMA**

Our organization's apple division has about 700 members who are great users of data. There are several different industry segments with about 50 percent juice, 25 to 30 percent canned, and the rest frozen. There are now a lot of fresh slices which are held refrigerated but never frozen. Are they included as frozen or included in "other" with vinegar and other uses?

**Don Ricks - Michigan State University**

There has been a big increase in fresh slices, so it is important to break out separately and not put with vinegar. It would be better to show fresh slices separately or at least include it with frozen.

{Editorial Note: Michigan State Statistical Office added a category - fresh slices - to their apple processing survey this year in response to Mr. Butler's inquiry. On the cold storage question, the slices should be included only under miscellaneous cooler stocks.}

**Jordan Tatter - International Association of Refrigerated Warehousemen**

Those slices are neither fresh nor frozen. They should be labeled as refrigerated.

**Tom Butler - MACMA**

For several years, I have observed that prices for the same variety of apples from western New York seem to be higher than for Michigan or the Hudson Valley. The AMS handout example today also shows that. I don't see any reason for the difference and wonder if there is a reporter effect.

**Chuck Brader - AMS**

AMS procedures call for verification of prices with buyers.

**Charles Hackensmith - AMS**

I spent some time in Buffalo with AMS. My observation is that the volume of fresh apples from western New York was relatively small and of good quality. Some buyers have shown a preference for western New York apples for specific markets. There also seems to be a grading effect that is reflected in the prices.

**Harry Foster - MACMA**

I have always felt that statistics must meet two criteria: they must be accurate and they must be timely. If they don't meet these criteria, they are not worthwhile.

I do appreciate the asparagus report that was reinstated a few years ago. However, I hope that NASS will monitor acreage and production in States not in the program to see if others should be added.

The information on delivery form (canned versus frozen), on a timely basis, has also been appreciated.

In this era of electronic automation, I would like NASS to consider if the Cold Storage report could be turned around quicker. The 10th of the month would be helpful for data rather than a late month release.

There are sometimes two or three numbers which seem to relate to the same thing but differ. For example, there may be some industry, AMS, and NASS data on tart cherries. There are some differences in concepts between the numbers. There are logical differences, but some users may not know that and it is not explained.



{Editorial Note: Inseason forecasts published by NASS represent production available for harvest. This includes cherries that are harvested but never sold and marketable production that is not harvested due to economic or other reasons, e.g., low prices, labor shortage, storm loss, etc.

At the end of the season, NASS estimates production available for harvest along with utilized production. Utilized production is broken down into fresh and processed totals. Processed totals are then broken down into canned, frozen, and other uses.

AMS on the other hand does no estimating of the tart cherry crop. They do collect and publish weekly inseason utilization figures. These data are collected from tart cherry processors. These statistics include cherries for processing, but exclude fresh market and unutilized cherries.}

Imports and exports will become even a bigger issue in the future. Already there may be more asparagus imported than Michigan produces. Good information is needed in order to deal with the International Trade Commission and other groups.

We would like to have a convenient electronic access to NASS reports. One which is cheap and easy to use.

Government agencies need to present statistics and analyses in a very straightforward fashion and not editorialize or sensationalize reports.

**Don Bay - NASS**

The Electronic Dissemination of Information system (EDI) contains a comprehensive data base of current agricultural statistical and narrative data issued by the USDA. The agricultural information includes crop and livestock statistics. All data are available to the public.

**Don Bay - NASS**

USDA tries to avoid editorializing or sensationalizing reports. However, we have no control over how the news media treat the reports on network news programs.

**Phil Korson - Cherry Marketing Institute**

In the final tart cherry summary there was no break out on pie filling. Can we release that data without giving away confidential information? It appears that this may be reported but lumped in the "other" category.

{Editorial Note: Cherry pie filling is included under "other cooler miscellaneous" stocks in the Cold Storage report. We don't think it is feasible to break this item out.}

Also, sweet cherries brine, canned, and frozen seem to be combined as "other."

**Don Ricks - Michigan State University**

Pie filling is now one of the most important utilizations. In the past, people tried to approximate it by subtracting out other industry data and getting pie filling as the residual.

He also questions how much of the sweet cherry crop from Michigan goes into brine. He knows the National Sweet Cherry Association surveys all briners. Could USDA get that data?

{Editorial Note: Beginning with the 1989 crop, the Michigan Cherry Committee will collect from each processor, the quantity of sweet cherries used for brine. The Northwest Cherry Briners Association's report will be used for check data. A letter explaining this new procedure has been sent to Dr. Ricks.}

**John Minnema - Cherry Central Cooperative**

We are very pleased with the cooperation we get from Don Fedewa and Charles Hackensmith and their offices staff. However, we do have some additional data requests.

On the monthly Cold Storage report, it would be helpful to break out frozen juice cherries from frozen cherry juice.

{Editorial Note: This suggested change to the Cold Storage report has been adopted.}

The cherry industry has changed from a cash approach to more of a coop payment approach. However, the prices reported at harvest sometimes seem to be a harvest "hopeful" price and not a final settlement. In extreme instances, final price might be as much as 50 percent lower. Perhaps all price information should come out later.

{Editorial Note: Because delayed pricing is becoming common, NASS will not publish a price in preliminary price in December.}

The fruit tree survey in Michigan is set up on an every 4-year basis. With the big tart cherry crops, 4 years is too long to wait. Perhaps some yearly survey such as for trees added and trees taken out could be done.

**Don Fedewa - NASS, Lansing, Michigan**

Perhaps for cherry price, we may need to follow the Concord grape price approach where final settlement may come after 2 or 3 years. Data are not final until then.

**Don Ricks - Michigan State University**

I agree there may be a cherry price parallel with grapes. Perhaps, we should report "payment to date" or "expected total payment." The problem is not just a Michigan phenomenon.

**Don Fedewa - NASS, Lansing, Michigan**

Our office would like to go to an annual fruit tree survey, but this would take considerable funding to maintain the present quality. The State Director of Agriculture, Paul Kindinger, has asked industry to go into partnership with the State Department on additional funding.

**Noel Stuckman - MACMA**

I agree that more tree surveys should be conducted. They have been paid for in the past through State and Federal cooperative funding. The industry position is that improved statistics aid everyone (growers, processors, and the consumer), so the public should fund them.

**Pete Vergot - Cooperative Extension Service**

In a special project, all maps of Van Buren County are being digitized. They will be able to measure acreages of fields or blocks of fruit. New images can be matched with data bases. It will be possible to identify new blocks or blocks removed. It might be feasible to count trees and pick up blueberry bushes.



**Don Fedewa - NASS, Lansing, Michigan**

The cherry objective yield survey does provide tree estimates each year from the postharvest interviews. NASS is interested in the remote sensing approach but lacks the funds to develop supporting operational research and data collection.

**Allen Shapley - Michigan State University**

I have worked on a number of management concerns concerning labor for vegetables. I have worked with both sides of these issues. There have been three purposes in the use of labor data. Michigan often has had the third highest ag labor rates, and I would like to study those rates not regional averages. Data are also often needed to study effects of new State labor proposals. It also is helpful to match July employment levels for the State with January levels to estimate seasonal workers. I now cannot carry out any of these three analyses because no State data are available.

{Editorial Note: NASS has requested funds for FY 1991 to expand the farm labor and wage rate survey so that State estimates for 7 additional States including Michigan will be available.}

**Manuel Gonzalez - Office of Migrant Services, MDSS**

Farm labor surveys should also request specific information on migrant workers.

**John Nelson - Jones Blueberry Ranch**

I would like to speak up on behalf of one of the three fruits native to the United States. The blueberry industry is expanding into more States. There are at least ten crops that NASS covers which have fewer sales than blueberries. People have had to depend on sketchy industry data which are not consistent or unbiased.

{Editorial Note: NASS has requested funds, for the past several years, to reinstate specialty crop estimates. The Agency has requested funds for FY 1991 to reinstate specialty crops estimates discontinued in 1982. If these funds are received, blueberry estimates will be reinstated. A letter to this effect was sent to Mr. Nelson.}

**Bruno Moser - Purdue University**

Present statistics reports lump all apples together but all transactions are by variety. Having variety information would be helpful to all States.

There also is a need for more data on the large, growing horticultural industries.

**Tom Butler - MACMA**

It would definitely be helpful to get good apple variety data back.

**Don Ricks - Michigan State University**

There is an increasing need for apple variety information, especially when we get into situations such as the Alar concern. The International Apple Institute does do preharvest forecasts but data on actual harvest are needed.

**Don Fedewa - NASS, Lansing, Michigan**

When apple variety surveys were conducted, the estimates were often misleading. Large sample sizes or censuses are needed since yield levels by variety can vary greatly from season-to-season.

**Don Ricks - Michigan State University**

Would it be possible to tie variety data into end-of-season utilization data and obtain it from shippers, processors, etc.?

**Dan Cooper - Iowa Department of Agriculture**

Don't forget turfgrass as a commodity for which information is needed. This was a difficult issue under the drought disaster payment program since no information is available on production and prices.

**Jack Kelly - Michigan State University**

In order to support information on more crops, would it be feasible to cover specific crops every 3 years or so with rotation by years? Could this provide information for expanding crops like broccoli and cauliflower?

**Don Bay - NASS**

The biggest cost and obstacle to doing specialty surveys is building a proper list. If a survey was to be conducted every 3 years or so, list building would still need to be done constantly. Turfgrass is a very hard industry to measure quickly since that is a very specialized list to obtain. NASS regular surveys of farms would miss a major portion of the turf grass industry.

**Don Fedewa - NASS, Lansing, Michigan**

Fruit utilization surveys are very labor intensive; almost a full census is needed.

**Beverly Barringer - Michigan Employment Security Commission**

Are the NASS labor survey data the ones that are used for the H-2A program?

**Rich Allen - NASS**

After the last change of procedures, DOL uses the available NASS State level or regional level data directly; previously the changes in wage rates were applied to base levels.

**Allen Shapley - Michigan State University**

The NASS data on field workers were not the most appropriate for H-2A purposes, since they include machine operators who have fairly high levels and might be affected by the additional piece rate work of children inflating parents' rates.

**Manuel Gonzalez - Office of Migrant Services, MDSS**

Michigan might come out short on labor issues because of lack of proper data.

**James Hudson - NAAS Foods, Inc.**

My particular industry is tomato processing. I would like to keep up as much as possible on data on imports of tomato products. Who has summaries on such things as can sizes from other countries?

**Gary Lucier - ERS**

FAS and ERS do try to summarize all available import and export data. However, fine details such as container sizes usually are not available.

**Robert Craig - Michigan Farm Bureau**

My organization represents 48,000 growers with one-third of them involved in specialty commodity production. Our organization has good relationships with AMS and NASS. They try to do all types of market research and find they need good statistics. He has a number of comments on present data series and data needs.



We are concerned about data series that have been lost and would like to see them restored if only on a postharvest end-of-season basis. This should include all fruit and bramble crops.

Are crop variety data a Federal or a State responsibility?

**Don Bay - NASS**

Due to the limited resources, NASS can not collect data by variety. If funds were made available to increase the sample size, variety estimates could be made at the State level.

**Robert Craig - Michigan Farm Bureau**

More utilization data are needed for specialty commodities. It appears that major crops may have siphoned off funds from minor commodities.

More vegetable data are needed, particularly on yields.

Michigan has good class data available for dry edible beans. However, since other States don't break classes out as well, Michigan might be in a disadvantaged position.

Equine data should be collected on a regular basis.

The State of Michigan and USDA should each fund its share of a data program.

**Don Ricks - Michigan State University**

Is the new "snack pack" type container for applesauce included under canned utilization? If not, where is it?

He believes that Michigan fresh apple prices might be "as sold" but Washington State are "packing house door." Do we really have differences by States and can this be standardized? Packing house door would be best.

Will AMS go to grower returns for apples like they do for other commodities?

**Charles Hackensmith - AMS**

This has been explored for apples, but AMS found so many variables and special grower/buyer procedures that they couldn't standardize definitions. They also met resistance from shippers who felt individual growers could already get the data they needed.

**Don Ricks - Michigan State University**

There probably will be an effort to reestablish a tart cherry marketing order. One important factor will be economic abandonment. Is that now measured?

**Don Fedewa - NASS, Lansing, Michigan**

That is measured in two ways. A postharvest gleaning is done on cherries on trees and on the ground using the objective yield sampling procedures. Growers in that survey are also asked for data after harvest.

**Don Ricks - Michigan State University**

To get the proper frozen versus fresh market split the cherry juice figure mentioned earlier will be more important in the future.

There is a need for more frequent tree survey data. If yearly removals can be measured, it would help the data series. The new Washington State variety data have been helpful.

He has heard that millions of pounds of barrels of frozen cranberries might be in storage. Can anyone verify that?

Blueberry data are surely needed since everyone must rely only on industry data.

**John Ferris - Michigan State University**

I describe myself as a "happy data user." Many data items I have needed in the past have been created.

About 25 years ago, I wanted dairy cow versus beef cow slaughter data and gilt versus barrow slaughter data. The "dairy herd buyout" provided the former data series and he hopes it is continued. The only hog slaughter breakout data are still just one small data set that Glenn Grimes gets.

Processing price data would be helpful along with any data on forward contracts.

I hope that cost of production data can be created for more fruits and vegetables. ERS needs to monitor all related university studies and expand their data series whenever possible.

I would like to see more long-term data sets made available both in hard copy and on floppy disk.

Most price data from AMS are spot data. Forward contracting price data should be added, if possible.

**Chuck Brader - AMS**

AMS is exploring the forward contracting data questions. There has been an inability to get standardization. They found 400 different contracts in California for one industry.

**Don Bay - NASS**

NASS would also like to get the barrow and gilt slaughter data. However, packers continue to respond that they don't keep track and they won't go to the effort of keeping track.

**Jim Johnson - ERS**

The National Cost of Production Review Board has been helpful in pushing for standardization of cost of production procedures and requiring more explanations. The Farm Costs and Returns Survey approach has been successful in collecting better data for each cost of production commodity.

**Don Seaborg - ERS**

ERS in recent years has emphasized building historical data bases. For many data series, ERS publishes data back as far as 20 years once a year. Many ERS analysts have now taken responsibility of using microcomputers to maintain historical data files.

**John Ferris - Michigan State University**

When any data changes are made, good explanations must be given to users. He recalled one change in the past concerning slaughter data that wasn't explained beforehand.

Livestock data should be put on an edible basis for matching with fish data. At the same time, fish production data are needed earlier like red meat and poultry data.



**John Kelly - Michigan State University**

Tom Butler and I were recently at a meeting of apple growers discussing Alar. No one really had a figure on the amount of acreage on which Alar had been used. Because of costs and other considerations, the percentage of acreage treated may have been as low as 4 or 5 percent. In the future, we may have consumer organizations appearing at these meetings demanding such data.

**Don Bay - NASS**

ERS might get some major funds for pesticide surveys in the 1990 budget because of concerns on water quality. They would not have had a chance to request the funds just because of general data needs.

**James Bonnen - Michigan State University**

I have spent much of my recent years fighting the wars on the need for data and answering questions on uses of information. There is no denying by rational people that more data are needed with more detail and finer geographic breakouts. I have tried to look for research opportunities to establish the value of improved data.

Data generation is labor intensive. Those costs have gone up faster than the Consumer Price Index. In real terms, the budgets of major statistical organizations have gone down 20 percent since 1980. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) continues to give statistical organizations grief. The OMB position is usually that data should be collected only to support the policymaking ability of the Administration. I am concerned that the quality of statistics in this country might soon fall below that of European countries.

When I served on Secretary Block's Blue Ribbon Panel studying statistical and economic reports of USDA about 4 years ago, I found three different viewpoints in industry. Companies that were in a dominant position in their industry wanted USDA to not collect any data. Companies that had strong analytical capabilities wanted USDA to issue data but do no analyses. Companies that wished to sell data wanted USDA to collect and analyze data but turn it over for dissemination. All of these approaches run counter to a free democratic society and a "level playing field" for all.

Data users need to have an impact on congressional appropriation committees and on OMB.

**Don Ricks - Michigan State University**

Do the agencies present see any changes or expect any changes concerning statistics from the Bush administration?

**Rich Allen - NASS**

No changes have been apparent yet. Currently, several specialized data series are up for OMB questionnaire approval renewal and they are being scrutinized very severely.

**Duane Dancer - Michigan Corn Growers & ASCS State Committee**

The drought disaster assistance legislation has shown some of the shortcomings of present data series. For example, some irrigation of corn has been done the past 8 to 10 years, but yield levels have never been documented. There has also been some unusual circumstances where a farmer moved years ago to another county and transferred records to the new county. They may qualify for disaster payments while neighboring farms reported in the county of production won't.

**Don Bay - NASS**

The NASS county statistics were not designed to be used for administering farm program payments, including those under the disaster program. However, for lack of better data,

they often are used because they are the best figures available. Certainly, within any county, there is a wide range in yields and cultural practices.

**Roger Hinebaugh - Michigan Corn Growers**

I would like to commend the agencies for holding this meeting and listening to agricultural organizations. Farmers need to be shown the need to answer data inquiries and to answer them correctly. Data comes back to farmers' pocketbooks.

**Jim Johnson - ERS**

How can ERS best present data for the public's use? Specifically, would more size group and cumulative data be helpful?

**Bob Craig - Michigan Farm Bureau**

Present formats were helpful for Michigan Farm Income Statistics reports. He feels they have been helpful in matching with Michigan State University data.

**John Ferris - Michigan State University**

Additional breakouts are helpful to broaden new analyses possibilities. He particularly appreciates the new Economic Indicator Series.



## DATA USERS MEETING

Syracuse, New York

March 15, 1989

**Gerald White - Cornell University**

The last potato cost of production data are now somewhat dated. Are there plans to update these?

**Gary Lucier - ERS**

Potato cost of production could have been in the next survey cycle, but ERS wanted to include lettuce and onions instead. However, after pretesting with the industry, it appears that the lettuce study cannot be done. The onion study will be in seven States next year.

**Enrique Figueroa - Cornell University**

There was an article on Alar based on a USDA study on per capita consumption by children. Was that from ERS work?

**Gary Lucier - ERS**

I am not familiar with the study mentioned. It might be by the consumption section in my Branch, but more likely the article may have come from the Human Nutrition Information Service of USDA.

**Dale Young - Cornell Cooperative Extension**

There are a number of concerns on relationships between Northeast States and Canada. Will ERS be studying some aspects under the Free Trade Act? Will ERS look at the "snapback" provisions? They have found, so far, some problems in using prices data from customs reports.

{Editorial Note: Currently, ERS is not looking at the "snapback" provisions in the Free Trade Act with Canada.}

**Enrique Figueroa - Cornell University**

Is the first adjustment to the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) base number of hours limited only to growers not being able to harvest due to labor shortages?

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

The labor shortage effect may also include reduced plantings and limits to their field operations which would reduce yield as well as production not harvested. For tree crops, it will relate mainly to harvest.

**Enrique Figueroa - Cornell University**

The data that Don Bay presented showed an average of 37 hours for field work in July. Is that the figure used for converting piece rate data?

**Don Bay - NASS**

The piece rate conversions are based on actual payments and estimated hours worked for each operation, not on any summary level data.

**Walter Ruehle - Farm Worker Legal Services of New York, Inc.**

Is there a possible problem with piece rate conversion since we depend on operator's estimates of hours worked instead of actual records?

**Don Bay - NASS**

That may be a concern but our interviews are only a few days after the survey week, so memory bias is minimized. We find that operators do estimate quite well on the average. Some may be slightly high or low but they average out.

**Enrique Figueroa - Cornell University**

Is the H2-A program data handled separately from the Replacement Agricultural Worker (RAW) data?

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

Yes, H2-A individuals are separately desegregated and won't get merged in with RAW or special agricultural worker information. However, the H2-A program does come into play in the calculation of the annual limitation on RAW's by being an adjustment to the total number of RAW's permitted.

**Jeff Lewis - Rural Opportunities, Inc.**

How many of the ES-92 forms have been received for the first quarter?

**Don Bay - NASS**

The count-to-date is lower than expected because of delayed information on the reporting requirement. Also, the October-December quarter will not be a peak quarter. The data on the ES-92's will be matched with the I-9 registrations from the Immigration and Naturalization Service to identify which people were SAW's and RAW's.

**Jeff Lewis - Rural Opportunities, Inc.**

Will the denominator on days worked by SAW's be based on current work or historic?

**Don Bay - NASS**

All calculations are based on actual work reported starting October 1, 1988. However, for this first year, work in the last quarter must be estimated since the shortage estimate must be created by October 1, 1989.

**Jeff Lewis - Rural Opportunities, Inc.**

It seems that data on days worked might be too low, particularly this first year.

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

The Bureau of the Census has an overseeing and approval role. Data can be adjusted if it can be supported that under-reporting has occurred.

**Enrique Figueroa - Cornell University**

Is it safe to assume that no regional allocations of RAW's will be made?

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

The Immigration Reform and Central Act put very few restrictions in because of discrimination concerns. People being legalized are not required to stay in one spot or required to stay in agriculture. Therefore, the RAW calculations will carry out that theme and only set one national figure.



**Gayle Dixon - Rural Opportunities, Inc.**

Will there be any distinction between temporary work authorizations and final acceptances?

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

INS should have all of the authorization records in their I-9 files which will be the information used. They will handle the expiration date information.

**Enrique Figueroa - Cornell University**

Has USDA ever taken the known acreages of crops and plugged in assumed labor requirements in order to match against total labor figures in an effort to validate the levels?

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

The only matching I am aware of is Farm Costs and Returns Survey labor expenditures compared to expanded hired worker data and wage rates from the Farm Labor Survey.

**Jim Johnson - ERS**

Labor requirements have been estimated for some commodities and producing areas but not for most fruit and vegetable crops.

**Don Bay - NASS**

Secondary data are not used in reviewing and setting the quarterly farm labor estimates that are published.

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

The IRCA program actually complicates the comparison of data since the 4-hour requirement to count each "person day" is embedded in the definitions.

**Bud Stanton - Cornell University**

How good are estimates of "unpaid" workers since they are based on only the four times a year surveys? The hired worker data can be checked against FCRS expanded expenditures but there is no similar check for unpaid. That also would be a concern for "total" labor input estimates.

**Jim Johnson - ERS**

There are some limited data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics on operator and unpaid labor which are helpful. Also, data from FCRS on total hours worked do match reasonably well with expanded farm labor data.

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

The farm labor data for 1989 should be improved since the January survey has been reinstated in all States.

**Bud Stanton - Cornell University**

We feel that the Farm Labor Survey approach might overestimate hours worked for part-time farms and marginal units on which labor is really under-utilized in terms of a job being there to do.

**James Burdett - New York Department of Labor**

Our organization and similar organizations in each State do estimate seasonal labor supplies and usage and submit those data to the U.S. Department of Labor. Those estimates are based on surveys and observations for small areas and specific commodities. His Agency's estimates are sometimes criticized for being too low compared to Bureau of the Census figures but one match-up study supported the New York data.

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

We are aware of the State agency data. While it will not be used directly in any of the calculations for the IRCA program, it will be used as supporting information to check against survey expansions.

**Enrique Figueroa - Cornell University**

Is it normally true that State agency data will be low compared to Census?

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

There is considerable variation but low estimates might be the general situation since State agencies usually concentrate on certain crops in major producing areas and don't cover all labor operations.

**James Burdett - New York Department of Labor**

Is there a summary for New York on SAW applications? He had heard one figure of 15,000 seasonal workers for New York which sounds like a gross overexpansion.

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

The figures he has seen from INS indicate over 40,000 applications for the SAW program from people living in New York. That does not imply that all normally work in New York or will work in New York in the future.

**Walter Ruehle - Farm Workers Legal Services, Inc.**

Is the voluntary reporting to NASS a problem? Would the program benefit by more reports on a mandatory basis? Has USDA considered making the report mandatory since it benefits so much of agriculture?

**Don Bay - NASS**

Precision of the report would be aided by a larger sample size. NASS has preferred to continue with voluntary surveys. The response rate on a well designed sample survey with personal follow-up is often higher than accomplished with mandatory censuses.

**John Steele - Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service**

We found out last year how important NASS data are and how helpful NASS staff members can be in a crisis. Yield data were needed on both program and nonprogram crops to implement the drought disaster provisions. Bob Schooley's office had much of the needed data and worked with ASCS staff members to create the rest. This disaster program was very unusual for ASCS. It took up to 2 hours to fill out the necessary application forms and it required reviews by county committees. The total payout for relief in New York might approach \$3 million.

**Floyd Duger - New York ASCS**

That disaster relief program required yields and rates county-by-county which was a very difficult data set to construct.

**Robert Schooley - NASS, Albany, New York**

Our office relies on all past data that our agency or other agencies have collected, plus contacts of a number of industry experts reviewing and correcting data prepared by county committees.



**Bill Ramage - New York State Department of Labor**

I appreciated Don Bay's comments on difficulties with getting complete coverage from a list. We try to survey apple growers from time-to-time. Are there any hints or suggestions for developing a good list?

**Don Bay - NASS**

NASS tries to contact all sources which might have names of producers and tries to get each group's list. The Agency has good data processing procedures for unduplicating names and addresses. One feature that often helps the Agency is that our list sampling frame is confidential and has legal protection. Thus, some groups might share with us but not with other organizations. Our State offices work full-time on list maintenance.

**David Geise - Pennsylvania Food Processors Association**

Data users today need to realize that we are dealing with world markets. I want to know how to keep aware of all information that I need to interpret tomatoes in global market.

**Gary Lucier - ERS**

We do break out all standard data once a year in the vegetable yearbook. David may need to get data on individual countries from the Foreign Agricultural Service.

**Don Seaborg - ERS**

One problem with keeping up-to-date is that the foreign data tend to lag badly.

**Jeff Lewis - Rural Opportunities, Inc.**

This session is a good opportunity to have exposure to other organizations that are using data. I want to come back to the approach of bringing in data from other sources in order to "back in" to estimates of labor used.

**Jim Johnson - ERS**

In our Branch, they have found it very difficult to estimate labor use from the bottom up because so many assumptions are needed. For instance, assuming a certain size of equipment implies the number of acres that can be covered in a year with an associated labor requirement, but you must further assume how efficiently that equipment will be used.

**Gayle Dixon - Rural Opportunities, Inc.**

Does USDA do any types of comparison over time of labor use for the same units?

**Rich Allen - NASS**

The Farm Labor Surveys, along with most USDA probability surveys, have new samples selected each year and have rotations built in within the year. This approach is used to minimize response burden, provide information from the survey for future stratification, and avoid biases that would result if new operations never could get into a sample. Some operations (large and specialized) are sampled at a high rate, so they are often in the sample. No longitudinal analyses have been done.

**Enrique Figueroa - Cornell University**

I would like to see more effort put on trying to back into the number of workers. The need for good information on farm laborers will increase in the future. The present level of reliability of estimates seems to be minimal.

When IRCA was first being discussed, the various estimates of numbers of farm workers varied by as much as 300 percent. Better estimates are needed.

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

To estimate the number of people working in agriculture would best be done by a household survey. ERS use to help fund an increased sample size for one CPS survey a year to provide some measure of total workers.

**Gerald White - Cornell University**

I have three notes of appreciation. Providing the 30 years of back estimates on tree numbers were really appreciated. The yield per acre estimates for fruit crops are helpful. The floriculture publication provides good information on this important industry. There are still a number of data needs. Supply and utilization information is needed for as many crops as possible, including import and export data. Nursery and turfgrass is a constant sore spot. There are some New York data but they are needed for all major States. We need benchmarks from time-to-time on the amount of organic fruit and vegetable production. More information is needed on pesticides for benefit assessments. Detailed information is needed for all States. For example, there is information on New York grape juice which is full strength and concentrated. However, California may crush more grape juice than all other States but it is not reported.

I will add an anecdote about data. A few years ago, someone wanted me to summarize data on apple prices by various grades. They told me not to use the AMS data; better information could be found in the magazine "The Packer." (Of course, "The Packer" was only summarizing and publishing AMS data.)

**Robert Addison - NASS**

The present floriculture survey covers five types of products (nursery and some other categories are not included) in 28 States. The industry designated the products and the States to include when the funding was obtained from Congress. The survey is to cover only operations with sales of more than \$10,000. The survey has been improved in the past 2 years by industry representatives providing more complete lists of operations. For operations interviewed for the first time this year which were in operation a year ago, the back data will be collected. The only other floriculture data are from the horticulture specialties census every 10 years which is being collected this year.

**Jim Johnson - ERS**

My unit is trying to summarize characteristics of all types of farms and their importance. There are some data on pesticide use for major crops from the NASS objective yield surveys. We do build pesticide information into each cost of production survey. There may be a big, new pesticide data initiative through the ground water concerns.

**Rich Allen - NASS**

There probably has been less pesticide data in recent years. Full scale pesticide surveys require a large effort. They are difficult to carry out since there are so many different products to cover. One thing that has been found in past surveys is that farmers often apply less of a product than Extension Service guidelines would be. It takes close review of reported data to verify that these applications are legitimate.

**Gerald White - Cornell University**

I think there will be specific problems in the future due to affects of fungicides which are just coming up for review.



Now that benefit assessments and risk assessments have been separated, manufacturers should be open to share their data on production. When the manufacturers' data have been examined, it appears that State control officials have estimated that more active ingredient was consumed than actually produced.

**Don Bay - NASS**

It will take very large sample sizes to measure small levels of applications. Large sample sizes are also needed to reduce sampling errors, since commercial companies want to be sure their products are properly expanded. There are plans, if funds become available, to collect more information on pesticide use during the next fiscal year.

**Enrique Figueroa - Cornell University**

I want to reiterate Jerry White's comments on the importance of nursery products. I feel USDA should allocate more resources to post farm gate operations--how do products move, where do they go, and what are the price differentials?

**John Shirley - AMS**

AMS does try to track data when commodities leave the farm as much as they can. However, budget cuts have forced a reduction from 41 cities to 23 cities. Information from many technical markets has been lost.

**Cliff Carman - Agway, Inc.**

I have concerns about a number of issues. Dairy is a very important industry but there are no U.S. level data. Two out of every three months only 21 States are covered. All States are reported only quarterly. I would prefer some type of regional and U.S. level data for each month. For example, could the entire New England region be covered monthly instead of Vermont only? There use to be enough resources for USDA to do cross checks of production and utilization.

**Don Bay - NASS**

The budget situation in recent years has forced some compromises on coverage. The greatest savings in personnel and costs occur when some States do not do surveys at all in certain months. Just cutting back sample sizes does not help much.

USDA still tries to examine all data in setting current estimates. NASS has considered using administrative data in some cases in place of survey data. For example, if all Federal milk marketing order data were available in time, it might substitute for producers surveys.

**Cliff Carman - Agway, Inc.**

Expanded administrative data might be better information if it were properly labelled.

**Bud Stanton - Cornell University**

I want to thank USDA for coming to New York. It is encouraging to see Agencies willing to come out and have a wide variety of questions. I do have a number of data questions.

How many observations are required before AMS and NASS will publish data? Sometimes the AMS data doesn't seem to match with NASS data, particularly for items with limited data such as corn in New York. Perhaps some data should not be published.

**Don Bay - NASS**

There is sometimes confusion on NASS grain prices. The mid-month price is essentially a "spot" price based on prices being paid at that time. The final price published the next month is based on actual volumes purchased and dollars paid during the entire month.

The published prices on the full-month basis are not for a specific grade but include all sales including discounts for moisture and/or foreign matter. Some prices are not published when there is no movement.

**Bud Stanton - Cornell University**

State aggregate farm income figures is one data series that I often get questions on. People have trouble understanding what those data mean and how they are produced. Data on cabbage would be particularly helpful. Could NASS publish a listing of all special surveys and reports which have been completed by State offices?

**Don Bay - NASS**

That is an excellent suggestion. Perhaps the listing can be published with the annual catalog of reports.

{Editorial Note: This suggestion is being implemented.}

**Jim Johnson - ERS**

The special State studies have the greatest value when they can be matched and evaluated across States. It would also be helpful to have access to data files in order to cross-tabulate information.

**Bud Stanton - Cornell University**

I feel that major statistical organizations (Census of Ag., NASS, ERS, Census of Manufacturers) should get together to decide how to create and publish data on contract production such as broilers. In thinking about contract agriculture, it is difficult to determine what a farm is and how value of inputs should be determined.

**Jim Johnson - ERS**

For the Hogs Costs of Production Survey, massive changes were made with six pages on contracting instead of the usual three questions. Over 3 years were spent in testing alternative questions on contracts and financial arrangement.

The suggestion of working with both the Census of Manufacturers and the Census of Agriculture is a good idea.

**Bud Stanton - Cornell University**

The labor discussion today has been good for all participants. It might be helpful to collect detailed labor data from some farms. This seems to be the weak link.

The FCRS approach of collecting data on the entire farm is a good step. Other than that approach, the Japanese and Europeans might be getting ahead of us on statistics.



**DATA USERS MEETING**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**March 16, 1989**

**George Roche - Maryland Department of Agriculture**

Could you expand on how the data that you are putting together are going to be used by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) or other agencies working on the Immigration Reform and Control Act program as to whether that may affect their processes or procedures for calculating shortages of labor. Will there be more paperwork or more problems involved in getting labor. Do you foresee any USDA involvement in that regard? Will State labor offices be using these data or is this going to be an after the fact evaluation of how they are performing?

**Robert Coltrane - ERS**

The shortage estimate that will result from this work will be taken by INS, and they will use that to legalize additional foreign workers. INS has just recently made public their preliminary procedures on how they will go about selecting those workers. Unless that number in this first year is extremely large, they will probably find enough undocumented workers already in the United States that have some experience working in agriculture. Those workers will be enough to try to supply this requirement the first year, and the public will not have to bring additional workers in. Once the new workers are legalized and have their card showing they are eligible to work in the United States, then there are no controls over where those workers go or what crops they work.

**Walter Armbruster - Farm Foundation**

There is interest in adopting alternative crops in a lot of States, like broccoli. Yet you report broccoli for four States. Are you capturing the change that's taking place in other production areas or is that more perception than reality? When do you need to start reporting for different areas to be reflecting what is actually going on? In addition, we have increase in imports of "exotic" fruits and vegetables. Do you report those and how do you know when to start reporting prices on imported products that are new? Is it when the first crate comes in or the first million crates come in?

**Robert Addison - NASS**

What we have done historically is to look at crops in the program and crops that need to be added to the program after each census revision period. Later this year, we will look at the States that need to be added to the program. The rule of thumb that we have used in the past is that a State should have 1 percent of the national production. We also might drop a State if it drops out of being important.

**Bill Crocker - AMS**

On the "exotic" crops commodities, seaweed for instance was an import item that's being grown in the U.S. When do you start reporting a crop like that?

**Robert Addison - NASS**

If we have a crop that's being grown in the U.S. that's not currently in the NASS estimating program, we need new funds to cover the costs unless the crop exceeds another crop that can be dropped.

**Ed Ashdown - National Peanut Council, Inc.**

Some of the reporting of peanuts stocks and processing were not complete, and as a result we approached the National Agricultural Statistics Service and other related agencies of USDA that contributed to the peanuts stocks and processing report. We formed a team of USDA and Peanut Industry representatives to work on a task force for over a year to improve the reporting of stocks and processing of peanuts. There had been some voids that were to the detriment of both parties. My comment is that if any industry feels their data could be improved, our experience is very positive that the NASS in USDA will be very happy to work with you.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

Through that effort, the report is more complete than it was 2 or 3 years ago when you raised that concern. The peanuts stocks report is the only report that we have that is a mandatory report. It is written into the law that people who process peanuts and have them stored must report.

**Michelle Bing - United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association**

I would like to see more of a breakdown between the fresh and the processed in the reports. The non-citrus fruit report has production for special processed, the value on a certain total, but I can't get value for non-citrus fruits. Nowhere can I find a value figure for total fresh fruits and nuts. I have to add up all the different figures myself. The last ERS Fruits Situation & Outlook, the figures for fresh fruit production do not correspond with NASS figures for total production. I don't know which is correct and end up not using either one.

{Editorial Note: We contacted Mrs. Bing regarding her request for total U.S. fresh market value of all noncitrus crops. Total value is reported, but it is not separated into its fresh and processed components at the all crops level. We will consider adding these data to the publication. We also discussed the differences in data published by NASS and ERS. The main discrepancy between numbers from the two Agencies probably is a result of ERS not using the latest revised data published by NASS. Mrs. Bing was asked to contact the NASS fruit statistician if this occurs again.}

**Lem Dillard - South Carolina Farm Bureau**

I have prepared a statement, I'll leave you a copy. One of the things brought up this morning was some mention of the Caribbean Basin Initiative countries and nearly 40 products imported from those countries. Do we have an adequate report on that at this time?

**Bill Crocker - AMS**

We do have an office that we established about a year and a half ago in Miami. One of the chief functions is to develop this information from the Caribbean Basin Initiative countries. Caribbean Basin imports are wired or mailed daily to subscribers. For all the supplies that come in, whether it's cantaloupes or cucumbers, we get the amounts directly from APHIS. Thus, we have a daily import shipment record and we also have prices. These are in a daily report that we put out of the Miami office. It's sort of unique because it's the only bi-lingual market report in the United States. Also, we put out an annual summary which contains all those shipment and prices.

**Lem Dillard - South Carolina Farm Bureau**

We would like to see if there was any way the peanut acreage report now released in July could be released after the Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation Service's deadline for planting peanuts has been completed. It seems that this causes growers problems sometimes trying to get contracts signed in that small period of time between the time your report comes out and the ASCS



reports. Sometimes the report comes out prior to the end of planting time and the contracts have been signed and the report is a little low or a little high. The report might cause the markets to go down when you're trying to get contracts signed. The ASCS figures will be out shortly thereafter and should be accurate.

**Robert Addison - NASS**

The peanut acreage planted is handled the same as all other major spring planted crops, the survey is conducted during the first 15 days in June and released in the July Crop Production report. All reports have price impact, but in the long run the effects are offsetting. Even though farmers have to certify their acreage by July 31, we do not get that acreage from ASCS until November. Whenever States get that data from ASCS, they adjust their planted and harvested acreage if needed.

**Lem Dillard - South Carolina Farm Bureau**

It seems at times, you request the same information month-after-month. I've filled out forms wanting to know how many oats I had in 1987 and then a few months later we have another one asking how many oats did you produce in 1987. That sort of thing makes me wonder if you really saved that first copy I sent you to start with. Another thing that gives farmers problems is keeping track of production records on crops that are sold, partially in one year and partially in another year. If you grow soybeans in 1988 and sell some of them in 1988, some of them in 1989, I have got to go to two different years plus 3 different places in the files to report total production. One of the things that I thought may be useful for your crop reporters, is a booklet or a guide to go by, maybe a place just to put these figures down to refer to when they are needed to fill out your reports. You know the kind of information you are going to be asking later; that might be helpful. I've had several growers mention to me some of the questions on the peach report are about things that are not very important to them. For example, some of the questions are asking about production that's discarded, production that is not harvested, production sold locally and used in-home. It is very difficult to know how many bushels were not harvested. Many growers certainly don't keep those kind of records and they question why you need to know that and why it is important.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We have a strong effort underway to avoid asking you the same question over and over but we aren't quite there yet. Certainly, with computers in the picture, if we ask you corn planted in August and you are in the survey later in the year, we should verify that number we obtained in August.

**Don Bay - NASS**

We have one annual survey that is sent to all good cooperators and they are kept in the sample year-after-year and help us make county estimates. Most other surveys rotate farms in and out of the sample. Providing crop reporters a guide or booklet to record information we are going to request later, is something we can try. We are interested in trying new ways to obtain more accurate reports and make it easier for you to report.

**Robert Addison - NASS**

For all fruit crops, except citrus, we estimate total production, which includes the portion culled and the amount lost because it wasn't harvested. This is because producers cannot accurately forecast the portion of each crop they will harvest until harvest is completed. NASS estimate of production is published before harvest is completed so the market will adjust to what the current year's crop indicates.

**Dick Smetana - Continental Grain**

Why do we have a month's delay on the stocks report when other reports are only 10 days. Why do we have to wait in the December report until January 10. I realize it is in conjunction with the annual report, but I don't see why you can't have these reports earlier.

**Don Bay - NASS**

We don't start collecting the grain stocks report data until after the first of the month, whereas the monthly crop yield data collection begins around the 23rd of the previous month. So, the data collection period is quite a bit later for the stocks report than it is for the yield estimate we put in the monthly crop report.

**Dick Smetana - Continental Grain**

I would like to encourage you to push it up if you can in any way.

**Don Bay - NASS**

We found that releasing the stocks report prior to the annual crop summary caused data users some problems and created unnecessary market uncertainty. NASS will try to shorten the period between data collection and release. If it wasn't for the end-of-year holiday season, it might be easier to release the December 1 grain stocks and annual summary during December.

**Dick Smetana - Continental Grain**

I would like the annual report pushed up. Occasionally I use the farm/off-farm breakouts on a national basis but not on a State-by-State basis. I wonder whether the amount of money put in to doing that could be best used for other stocks reports such as the sorghum stocks report. In corn you have something like 19 States that you get on-farm and off-farm, 21 States that don't have either on-farm or off-farm. What's the worth of those States' data?

**Don Bay - NASS**

We have to deal with it from an estimating standpoint as two separate universes, on-farm and off-farm. From our standpoint we are dealing with actually two different estimates. We have considerable interest in the State data which is available for the major production States.

**Dick Smetana - Continental Grain**

I would concur that with my third point, why don't we have stocks reports for sorghum on the December 1 and the March 1 reports. When you are taking in the same States, barley, wheat, and corn, sorghum is not going to be that much more.

**Don Bay - NASS**

This goes back to a cutback in 1982. Sorghum, causes the most callbacks of any commodity on the grain stocks questionnaire because of the problem of reports in different units of measure, hundredweight, bushels, pounds, and tons. The extra follow-up was the reason why we could gain some actual savings by dropping sorghum.

**Dick Smetana - Continental Grain**

I think it's worth the effort. I don't think there's a specialty crop that comes close to that. It's a 2 billion bushel crop and we only get two estimates a year on stocks.

**Don Bay - NASS**

We have put in some of the stocks that were eliminated and we will reconsider sorghum.



**Dick Smetana - Continental Grain**

Why do we not publish off-farm stocks for all States?

**Don Bay - NASS**

The reason for not publishing off-farm stocks for a State is usually a disclosure problem. The reason we do not publish on-farm estimates for all States is that the sample size is not large enough in some States for individual State estimates.

**Bryan West - Agriculture Canada**

Bill Crocker just handed me the Market News Service report on fruits and vegetables and there were things in there I had never seen before. I wonder what else is available that I don't know about, both Federal and State level data. The second thing is, I guess we are all growing into the electronic age. We have started to make use of the electronic data service going through Martin Marietta. We found, 2 weeks ago, that our line got cut off or something broke and we can no longer access it. We have great masses of books of what is defined but we are still learning. For crop reports, we may spend half an hour capturing, then reading, and then find that half of it is not what we want. We don't find it structured as well as we would like it.

I am also interested in wild rice production data.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We will get your concerns to those that manage the Department's electronic data services. I don't think our Minnesota office is doing anything with wild rice, although I know there are sizeable quantities of wild rice harvested in Minnesota. Right now, there is no new funding for collecting wild rice production. We do have a plan for surveying all the specialty items when we have the resources and support of the particular industries involved.

{Editorial Note: Minnesota does not make wild rice estimates. Minnesota publishes in their Acreage and Production Annual Bulletin data provided by the Minnesota Paddy Wild Rice Research and Promotion Council.}

**Don Bay - NASS**

Something that came up in Syracuse was that someone asked us to have our State offices, at least once a year, indicate what special reports or surveys they participated in.

**Dale Jeffrey - North American Maple Syrup Council**

The production of maple syrup is listed as one of the specialty commodities which was eliminated through your budget cuts in early 1980's. The production of this syrup has continued to grow and the industry has continued to survive throughout the northeastern United States, ranging as far west as Minnesota and as far south as Kentucky and Blue Ridge Mountains so the industry is not as confined as many people think it might be. What I would like to ask is getting maple syrup reinstated as part of the crop reporting service. My reason for this is our industry presently is being faced by a very serious threat from an insect, terathrip. In attempting to get federal funding for research to help find solutions for our problems, the first question we are asked is what size is your industry. We are at a loss because of the elimination of reporting service. You mentioned that several States are still doing it. How are some of these States doing it and the rest of us are not being included in it and what can be done to get our entire industry listed again on your reporting service?

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

States that are reporting maple syrup are doing it with local funds. New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts are publishing annual maple syrup data.

**Dale Jeffrey - North American Maple Syrup Council**

In Pennsylvania, we feel the industry is worth about \$3 million, Vermont is talking about \$22 million in State income generated by maple syrup. I look at this survey and it says \$22 thousand to reinstate the program. You are looking at millions of dollars being generated in agriculture, so I think something is seriously wrong when we have a problem finding such a small figure to get us the reports back that we need. We may be looking at an economic disaster for some farmers that depend on maple syrup for additional income. Without the proper research to control the insect terathrip, we may lose the maple trees and the maple syrup industry.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We did request money specifically to restore maple syrup estimates but, unfortunately, we did not get that request in the present budget that went to the Hill. However, a similar request for next year's budget has been approved by the Department and we are hoping it will clear OMB and Congress.

**Dale Jeffrey - North American Maple Syrup Council**

If it would become necessary that this should be funded from the industry, what course do we take towards that. Two years ago, we established a checkoff procedure where we charged the producers one cent per container for research or funding needed for support of the industry. We are starting to collect funds at the checkoff project that we have undertaken through our National Council. Is it possible to fund this through a private funding?

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

Very definitely, the Malting Barley Association funds surveys on barley varieties every year. The citrus program in Florida is paid for entirely through a tax on every box that is produced. They provide more money to us in Florida from the citrus growers than the Federal Government puts into that office. In California, almost all the fruit and nuts statistics are funded by industry and the State Department of Agriculture.

We can provide you some information on how these trust funds work. The Catfish Farmers of America, until last year, paid for four quarterly surveys in Mississippi, just one State. Last year they went to Congress and got funds put in the NASS budget to conduct nation-wide surveys of catfish and trout. It's very common to have industry funds support specific survey programs for their commodities.

**Lyn Davenport - Delaware Department of Agriculture**

One thing this morning that was brought out, that 1 percent of national production is required for a State to be added to an estimating program. That would just about leave us out of everything.

**Robert Addison - NASS**

That is a rule of thumb, but can be altered. We also consider how important some commodities are to that State's agricultural industry.

**Lyn Davenport - Delaware Department of Agriculture**

We would like to see watermelon estimates back in somehow, it's a very important commodity in Delaware.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

We have requested funds every year to put watermelon estimates back in the Federal program.



**Dale Jeffrey - North American Maple Syrup Council**

Would it be possible for you to come up with how much it would cost to do a maple syrup survey in Pennsylvania?

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

Yes, we can come up with the estimated cost.

**Lyn Davenport - Delaware Department of Agriculture**

There seems to be a conflict between Census figures and yours in the number of farms and acres in farms, this causes some problems. I just wondered if the publication data couldn't be more or less the same so we wouldn't have this conflict.

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

The Census is done every 5 years and published about a year and a half after the data are collected. We work closely with the Bureau of the Census to have good data because major differences in data create problems. Our feeling is that this year's census is generally better than the previous Census.

**Don Bay - NASS**

Number of farms would seem to be a very easy thing to estimate, but we have more trouble with that number than with estimates of corn or soybean acreage. Commercial farms are getting larger so people think there should be fewer of them. At the same time you have small farms growing up around urban areas. Part of the difference between the Census and NASS count is caused by the fact that the Census includes a farm that has horses for pleasure or racing purposes and we do not.

**Douglas Miller - Bureau of the Census**

We are working together as you said on the program. NASS State representatives review farm census data and have a chance to correct problems they find before we publish the data.

**Dick Smetana - Continental Grain**

Have you heard from the grain sorghum producers since you discontinued the grain sorghum stocks?

**Charles Caudill - NASS**

The barley people really responded to the elimination of the barley stocks and their response was to go to Congress and get some money put into the NASS appropriation to restore the estimates. It is written into our appropriation bill that the barley stocks estimates be restored. The only reason we do pickle stocks is one Congressman in Michigan put that money in our budget. However, we are not aware of the grain sorghum producers asking Congress to re-store stocks estimates.

**John Lee - ERS**

The maple syrup people commented a while ago that you had a good production last year and a good price and you sold most of your product, but you said the Canadians are sitting across the Border with a big reserve left from last year and you're worried what their reserves are going to do to the market. The gentleman here from the Agriculture Canada, I wonder during the discussion on the free trade agreement, was any discussion on harmonization of statistics across the 2 countries?

**Leo Mayer - Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economics**

The answer is No but, I see that as one of the follow-up issues that will need serious consideration. That is, if you completely eliminate the restrictions of the border, then planting intentions reports become a North American phenomenon and what the crop size is becomes a North American phenomenon, especially for specialty crops. I think the Department and Ag. Canada are going to have to think about how to harmonize that system in the future.



**Participants at Orlando, Florida Data Users Meetings  
March 1-2, 1989**

John Adams  
Office of the Governor  
Tallahassee, Florida

Mark Brown  
Florida Department of Citrus  
Lakeland, Florida

Duke Chadwell  
Citrus Administration Committee  
Lakeland, Florida

Jim Cravey  
Alabama Farmers Federation  
Montgomery, Alabama

Jerry Graham  
Florida Citrus Mutual  
Lakeland, Florida

Steve Guy  
Alabama Farmers Federation  
Montgomery, Alabama

Houston Ham  
Bureau of Labor Market Information  
Tallahassee, Florida

Al Helms  
Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association  
Orlando, Florida

Ron Mahan  
Collier Enterprises  
Immokalee, Florida

Shirley Manchester  
Florida Lime & Avocado Admin. Comm.  
Homestead, Florida

Linda Metzger  
Belle Glade Job Service Office  
Belle Glade, Florida

Walt Mitchell  
Georgia Peanut Producers Association  
Blakely, Georgia

Robert L. Tison  
NAFCO Citrus Management Co., Inc.  
Arcadia, Florida

John Vansickle  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, Florida

John Walpole  
Sunny Point Farms  
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina

Chuck Zimmerman  
Florida AgriNet Radio Network  
Ocala, Florida

**Participants at Sacramento, California Data Users Meetings  
March 7-8, 1989**

Juan Batista  
Agricultural Department Fresno  
Fresno, California

Judee Benton  
Office of Economic Development  
Merced, California

Harold Bradshaw  
Iceberg Lettuce Advisory Board  
Salinas, California

Roberta Cook  
Department of Agricultural Economics  
Davis, California

Bob Crockett  
ASCS  
Sacramento, California

John DeLuca  
Wine Institute  
San Francisco, California

Cornelius Gallagher  
Bank of America  
Rancho Cordova, California

Bob Hartzell  
California Association Wine Grape Growers  
Sacramento, California

Mark Hays  
Paramount Citrus  
McFarland, California

Stephen Heinrichs  
Blue Diamond Growers  
Sacramento, California

Bill Johnson  
California Canning Peach Association  
Lafayette, California

Kyra Kingore  
Ag. Comm San Mateo County  
Redwood City, California

Ken Lindauer  
Prune Bargaining Association  
Yuba City, California

Bill Martinet  
Sunkist Growers  
Van Nuys, California

Frank Mosebar  
Dried Fruit Association  
Santa Clara, California

Gary Olson  
California Marketing  
Fresno, California

Loren Parks  
Analytics, Inc.  
Carmichael, California

John Ross  
California Cattlemen's Association  
Sacramento, California

Don Villarejo and David Runsten  
California Institute for Rural Studies  
Davis, California

Kenneth S. Sakurada  
University of Nevada  
Reno, Nevada

Pat Sanguinetti  
Blue Anchor, Inc.  
Sacramento, California

Gene Shamoon  
Paramount Citrus Association  
Mission Hills, California

Wade Strom  
Wine Institute  
San Francisco, California

Gene Stockes  
California Apricot Advisory Board  
Walnut Creek, California

Art Verissimo  
Market News Branch  
Sacramento, California

Richard Wetzel  
California Wheat Commission  
Woodland, California

Jay Wilson  
California Wool Growers Association  
Sacramento, California



**Participants at Portland, Oregon Data Users Meetings  
March 9, 1989**

Richard Betz  
Oregon/California Potato Committee  
Sherwood, Oregon\_

Susan Blosser  
Oregon Wine Grower's Association  
Dayton, Oregon

C. Burmester  
Oregon Poultry Industries  
Portland, Oregon

D. Burmester  
Oregon Poultry Industries  
Portland, Oregon

Tom Cooper  
Federal-State Market News  
Idaho Falls, Idaho

W. W. Dewitt  
Wenatchee Valley Traffic Association  
Wenatchee, Washington

Robert Gelhar  
Filbert/Hazelnut Marketing Board  
Tigard, Oregon

Ann George  
Washington Hop Commission  
Yakima, Washington

Robert Hansen  
Idaho & Eastern Oregon Potato Committee  
Idaho Falls, Idaho

Warren Henninger  
Carnation  
Moses Lake, Michigan

George Hewlett  
Western Washington Horticulture Association  
Puyallup, Washington

Teresa Hutchinson  
USDA/NWMFO  
Portland, Oregon

Robin Jones  
Washington State Department of Agriculture  
Olympia, Washington

Mike Klein  
Filbert/Hazelnut Bargaining Association  
Tualafin, Oregon

Norbert Kinen  
Oregon Nurserymen Association  
Boring, Oregon

Larry Lev  
Oregon State University  
Corvallis, Oregon

Michele Mansfield  
Employment Security, LMEA  
Olympia, Washington

Stan Miles  
Extension Economist  
Corvallis, Oregon

Stephen Naught  
Washington Barley Commission  
Pomeroy, Washington

Pete Naumes  
Fruit Growers League  
Medford, Oregon

Ken Palke  
Capital Press  
Salem, Oregon

Grafton Pauls  
Washington State Wool Growers  
Chehalis, Washington

Joe Perrn  
USDA/NWMFO  
Portland, Oregon

Paul Rains  
Oregon Fryer Commission  
Portland, Oregon

Henry Sakamoto  
Agriculture Advisory Board  
Portland, Oregon

Robert Sargent  
WSU Cooperative Extension  
Pullman, Washington

Arden Sheets  
Washington County Extension Office  
Hillsboro, Oregon

Wes Sloulin  
Stone Fruit Marketing Committees  
Yakima, Washington

Rick Stevenson  
Oregon Farm Bureau Federation  
Salem, Oregon

Roxanne Williams  
USDA/OIRM  
Washington, D.C.

Tom Winn  
Oregon Wheat Commission  
Portland, Oregon

Dick Yost  
Oregon Farmer-Stockman  
West Linn, Oregon

**Participants at Lansing, Michigan Data Users Meeting  
March 14, 1989**

Mark Arney  
Michigan Apple Committee  
Dewitt, Michigan

Robert Baldwin  
Michigan Fish Growers Association  
Big Rapids, Michigan

Beverly Barringer  
Michigan Employment Security Commission  
Muskegon Heights, Michigan

James Bonnen  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan

Barry Brand  
National Christmas Tree Association  
Sparta, Michigan

Pat Burke  
Michigan Apple Commission  
Dewitt, Michigan

Tom Butler  
MACMA  
Lansing, Michigan

Jerry Campbell  
MACMA  
Decatur, Michigan

Dan Cooper  
Iowa Department of Agriculture  
Des Moines, Iowa

Sam Carini  
Marketing & Bargaining Board  
West Olive, Michigan

Rod Cook  
Michigan Blueberry Growers Association  
Grand Junction, Michigan

Robert Craig  
Michigan Farm Bureau  
Lansing, Michigan

David Curwen  
Hancock Agricultural Research Station  
Hancock, Wisconsin

Duane Dancer  
Michigan Corn Growers  
Munith, Michigan

Robert DeBruyn  
DeBruyn Produce  
Zeeland, Michigan

Gerald Deer  
Michigan Employment Security Commission  
Cadillac, Michigan

John Ely  
Michigan State Grange  
Waldron, Michigan

John Ferris  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan

Harry Foster  
MACMA  
Lansing, Michigan

Lee Gonzales  
Michigan Department of Agriculture  
Lansing, Michigan

Manuel Gonzalez  
Office of Migrant Services, MDSS  
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Charles Hackensmith  
Michigan Dept. of Agriculture  
Benton Harbor, Michigan

Mark Hansen  
Cooperative Extension Service  
Paw Paw, Michigan

Randy Harmson  
Michigan Department of Agriculture  
Lansing, Michigan

Don Hill  
Michigan Farm Bureau  
Montrose, Michigan

Sandra Hill  
Michigan Farm Bureau  
Montrose, Michigan

Roger Hinebaugh  
Michigan Corn Growers  
Remus, Michigan

Jack Hobson  
Aunt Jane Foods  
New Lothrop, Michigan

James R. Hudson  
NAAS Foods, Inc.  
Portland, Indiana

Jerome Hull, Jr.  
Michigan State Horticultural Society  
East Lansing, Michigan

Howard Kelly  
Michigan Farm Bureau  
Lansing, Michigan

Jack Kelly  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan

Phil Korson  
Cherry Marketing Institute  
Okemos, Michigan

Jim Krone  
Roses, Inc.  
Haslett, Michigan



**Participants at Lansing, Michigan Data Users Meeting (Continued)**  
**March 14, 1989**

Ben Kudwa  
Michigan Potato Industry Commission  
Dewitt, Michigan

Dale Kuenzli  
Valley Marketing Cooperative  
St. Johns, Michigan

Raymond Kunze  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan

Kevan (Butch) Kvanne  
Bellingham Frozen Foods  
Hartford, Michigan

Carl Lauder  
Michigan Food Processors Association  
Holland, Michigan

Dan Lyons  
NAAS Foods, Inc.  
Portland, Indiana

Eric Macleod  
Cherry Growers, Inc.  
Traverse City, Michigan

Lester Mandersceid  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan

David McConnaughey  
Congressman Howard Wolfe's Office  
Lansing, Michigan

Eric Melkerson  
Campbell Soup Company  
Napoleon, Ohio

John Minnema  
Cherry Central Cooperative  
Traverse City, Michigan

Bruno Moser  
Purdue University Horticulture Department  
West Lafayette, Indiana

John Nelson  
Jones Blueberry Ranch  
Mishawaka, Indiana

John Okay  
OIRM  
Washington, D.C.

Rich Olson  
MACMA  
Lansing, Michigan

Raymond Passage  
Gerber Products Company  
Fremont, Michigan

Paul Pfenninger  
Monitor Sugar Company  
Bay City, Michigan

Dan Rajzer  
Cooperative Extension Service  
Paw Paw, Michigan

Howard C. Richards  
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture  
Madison, Wisconsin

Don Ricks  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan

Dave Rose  
Michigan Fish Growers Association  
Big Rapids, Michigan

Ray Schaub  
National Corn Growers Association  
Ithaca, Michigan

Allen Shapley  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan

John Shelford  
Michigan Blueberry Growers Association  
Grand Junction, Michigan

Noel Stuckman  
MACMA  
Lansing, Michigan

Walter Sullivan  
Michigan Employment Security Commission  
Detroit, Michigan

Jordan Tatter  
International Association of Refrigerated Warehousemen  
Benton Harbor, Michigan

Mike Thomas  
Cooperative Extension Service  
Paw Paw, Michigan

Camille Valley  
Iowa Department of Agriculture  
Des Moines, Iowa

Pete Vergot  
Cooperative Extension Service  
Paw Paw, Michigan

Howard Wetters  
Agricultural Advisor to Governor  
Lansing, Michigan

John Woodworth  
Farmers Home Administration  
East Lansing, Michigan

Charles Wright  
Wrights Seed Farm  
Gaston, Indiana

**Participants at Syracuse, New York Data Users Meeting  
March 15, 1989**

James Burdett  
New York Department of Labor  
Rochester, New York

Cliff Carman  
Agway, Inc.  
Syracuse, New York

Gayle Dixon  
Rural Opportunity, Inc.  
Rochester, New York

Floyd Dugen  
USDA-ASCS  
Washington, D.C.

Enrique E. Figueroa  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, New York

Gary Gasparini  
NYS Nurserymens Association  
Camillus, New York

Dave Geise  
Pennsylvania Food Processors Association  
Northumberland, Pennsylvania

Jeff Lewis  
Rural Opportunity, Inc.  
Rochester, New York

Bill Ramage  
New York State Department of Labor  
Rochester, New York

Walter Ruehle  
Farm Worker Legal Services of N.Y., Inc.  
Rochester, New York

Beverly Siegel  
Agway, Inc.  
Syracuse, New York

Bud Stanton  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, New York

John Steele  
USDA-ASCS  
Syracuse, New York

Gerald White  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, New York

Dale Young  
Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Mexico, New York



**Participants at Washington, D.C. Data Users Meeting  
March 16, 1989**

Walter Armbruster  
Farm Foundation  
Oak Brook, Illinois

Greg P. Armotrading  
National Dairy Board  
Arlington, Virginia

C. Edward Ashdown  
National Peanut Council, Inc.  
Alexandria, Virginia

Michelle Bing  
United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Association  
Alexandria, Virginia

Bruce Boynton  
National Honey Board  
Longmont, Colorado

Lyn Davenport  
Delaware Department of Agriculture  
Dover, Delaware

Lem Dillard  
South Carolina Farm Bureau  
Greer, South Carolina

Ronald Gaskill  
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

H. Habermann  
OMB  
Washington, D.C.

Hosea S. Harkness  
Sparks Commodities, Inc.  
Arlington, Virginia

Tom Hebert  
Senate Ag. Committee  
Washington, D.C.

P. Hickman  
Virginia Department of Agriculture  
Richmond, Virginia

Dale Jeffrey  
North American Maple Syrup Council  
West Salisbury, Pennsylvania

Duane Jelinek  
American Association of Nurserymen  
Washington, D.C.

Kendell Keith  
National Grain & Feed Association  
Washington, D.C.

John W. Kirkbride  
Sparks Commodities, Inc.  
Arlington, Virginia

Peter Matthews  
Franklin Mushroom Farm  
North Franklin, Connecticut

Larry McKensie  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
Washington, D.C.

Douglas Miller  
Bureau of the Census  
Washington, D.C.

Niall Murphy  
Heron, Burchette, Ruckert, & Rothwell  
Washington, D.C.

John Powell  
S.E. Peanut Association  
Albany, Georgia

Larry Roberson  
USDA-OIRM  
Washington, D.C.

George B. Roche  
Maryland Department of Agriculture  
Annapolis, Maryland

Michael Shaw  
The Ceres Group  
McLean, Virginia

Richard Sinclair  
M&M Mars  
Albany, Georgia

Dick Smetana  
Continental Grain  
New York, New York

Bruce West  
Maryland Department of Agriculture  
Annapolis, Maryland

Bryan West  
Agriculture Canada  
Ottawa, Canada

## USDA HEADQUARTERS STAFF AT 1989 DATA USERS MEETINGS

<u>PERSON</u>	<u>AGENCY</u>	<u>MEETINGS ATTENDED 1/</u>
Robert Addison	National Agricultural Statistics Service	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Rich Allen	National Agricultural Statistics Service	4, 5, 6
Don Bay	National Agricultural Statistics Service	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Charles Brader	Agricultural Marketing Service	2, 3, 4
H. B. Buchanan	Agricultural Marketing Service	1
Boyd Buxton	Economic Research Service	1, 3
Charles Caudill	National Agricultural Statistics Service	1, 2, 3, 6
Robert Coltrane	Economic Research Service	1, 4, 5, 6
Bill Crocker	Agricultural Marketing Service	1, 6
Jay Guerber	Agricultural Marketing Service	6
Jim Horsefield	Economic Research Service	3, 6
Allen Johnson	Economic Research Service	2, 3, 6
Jim Johnson	Economic Research Service	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
Robert Keeny	Agricultural Marketing Service	1
John Lee	Economic Research Service	6
Gary Lucier	Economic Research Service	4, 5, 6
Leo Mayer	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economics	6
Bob Robinson	Economic Research Service	1
Don Seaborg	Economic Research Service	4
John Shirley	Agricultural Marketing Service	5
Jim Smith	National Agricultural Statistics Service	4
Roger Strickland	Economic Research Service	3
Fred Thorp	National Agricultural Statistics Service	1, 3, 6

1/ Meetings were (1) Orlando, (2) Sacramento, (3) Portland, (4) Lansing, (5) Syracuse, (6) Washington, D.C.



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Washington State University

Pullman, Washington 99164-6230 / 509-335-2811

February 21, 1989

Charles E. Caudill  
Administrator  
USDA/NASS  
Room 4117 South Building  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Caudill:

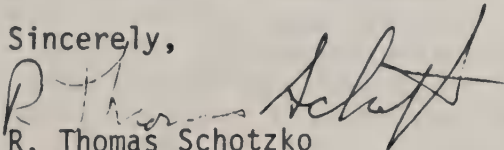
Mr. Doug Hasslen has informed me of the meeting you plan to conduct in Portland, Oregon dealing with agricultural data needs. Since I have prior commitments and will be unable to attend, I decided to offer my appreciation and comments in writing.

As a frequent user of the data you provide I want to, first, thank you for the efforts put forth by the Agricultural Statistics Service at the state and national levels. There is no question that without your efforts returns to agricultural producers would be even less than they have been. During my ten years as an extension professional I have encountered many producers who make good use of your data.

As I have used the data over the years I have become more aware of the statistical reliability associated with the data. It has occurred to me that there is an economic concept that may be of use to you in guiding the allocation of scarce resources among the commodities you currently monitor. The reliability of every statistical estimate is determined by the number of observations. I would offer for your consideration the thought that the determination of the number of observations being collected for each data set be, at least, partially influenced by the elasticity of demand for the commodity being observed. Commodities with low elasticities of demand are very price sensitive to changes in supply. Consequently, a smaller margin of error is desirable. For commodities with high elasticities of demand the number of observations used to generate the estimates could be reduced because the loss in efficiency would have less effect on producer and consumer prices.

Elasticities may also be useful in determining which of the minor commodities to monitor. In general, it appears that the lower the elasticity of demand, the greater the value of data. There is likely little to be gained from a national welfare perspective in collecting information on minor commodities that have high elasticities of demand. Verifiable information from producer associations may be sufficient.

Sincerely,

  
R. Thomas Schotzko  
Extension Economist

law:SHTZK1

75



State of Wisconsin \ Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations

Employment and Training Policy Division  
Labor Market Information Bureau

201 E. Washington Avenue  
P.O. Box 7944  
Madison, Wisconsin 53707

February 22, 1989

Charles E. Caudill, Administrator  
USDA/NASS  
Room 4117 South Building  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Caudill:

I regret that I am not able to attend either of the two meetings regarding your economics and statistics reports. I would like, instead, to submit the following comments.

Through the merged efforts of the national and state Agricultural Statistics Services, we know the number of hogs, the number of cows, and the average milk produced per cow for every county in Wisconsin. We know the number of acres of green peas and the yield per acre in every county in Wisconsin. With these measures we can see how different crops were affected by the drought. This information is essential for marketing during this season and planning for the next season. But, this farm commodity information makes the lack of information about farm people all the more awkward.

Most policy makers cannot understand why we do not know the number of people employed on farms in the state when we can tell them how many hogs there are in every county. State administrators and legislatures need to know how many farm families and farm workers are affected by such problems as increasing interest rates, depreciating farm land prices, and the drought. The agriculture department can tell them how the drought affected crop production. We can tell them how the drought affected employment in the canning industry. We do not know how the drought affected employment on Wisconsin farms. We do not even know the total employment on Wisconsin farms last summer.

I am sure that I reflect the opinion of Labor Market Information Directors in all farm states when I say that it is embarrassing. It is embarrassing to tell people that we do not have a reliable estimate of agricultural employment for Wisconsin. It is even more embarrassing to say that we do have an estimate that we know is not reliable, and that we often give out that estimate because people need some kind of answer, and our lousy estimate is the best we have.

Data about people is needed for social programs to help farmers and farm workers. Information about farmers affected by farm hardship is supposed to be used in allocating dislocated worker funds to substate areas. Most states probably gave this factor a zero weight, because there were no adequate data to allocated funds according to farm hardships. In Wisconsin we used 1986 farm income, assuming that the most farmers with incomes under the poverty level would be in counties with the highest farm incomes because there was a positive correlation of .90 between these two factors in 1979. This is certainly not a satisfactory way to identify where the need to help dislocated farmers is the greatest.

Information about farm workers and sources of farm income is important in consideration of state rural development policies. We have long known that there was a relationship between the economic health of farms and the economic health of the small communities providing services for farm families. It appears that the economic well being, even continued existence of many farms now depends upon whether members of the farm family can earn sufficient incomes in off farm jobs. With slower labor force growth, some measure of the potential of farm families as a source of labor for other industries may be an important tool in promoting rural development as well as a means of saving many family farms.

We provide career information concerning nonfarm wage and salary employment for vocational guidance and for education for employment programs. We recognize that this information is also needed to improve vocational guidance and training for future farmers and farm workers. Farming has become a high technology industry. There will continue to be a need for well trained farmers and farm workers, but there is almost no information about changing farm skills. We need estimates of the number people that will be needed to replace turnover in farming, and we need to know the kinds of skills that are required for different kinds of farming.

The basic need is for adequate quarterly state estimates of agricultural employment, and for a system which will provide other information about farmers, farm families, and farm workers for use in developing federal and state socio-economic policies and programs for them.

One description of the kind of program that would meet this need would involve expansion of the present quarterly survey with added questions twice a year. The quarterly survey would regularly provide statistically valid estimates of the number of people living on farms, and the number employed on the farm. The added questions twice a year would be designed to respond to other needs for information such as those described above. I would recommend that at least half of the additional questions be developed by an advisory committee in each state, and that the advisory committee agree to provide analysis of the results. A similar advisory committee might help do develop some of the additional questions nationally for uniform response in all states. The state committee should include the directors of the state Labor Market Information and of the state Occupational Information Coordinating Council to insure that the questions relate to the employment issues.



Thank you for considering these comments. I hope that your meetings are productive, and that you will call upon me if there is anything more that I can do to encourage the development of adequate state labor market and occupational information that includes farmers and farm workers.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "H. J. Jackson".

Hartley Jackson, Director  
Labor Market Information

C. ALAN PETTIBONE  
Director



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

406 General Administration Bldg., AX-41 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0641 • (206) 753-5063

February 28, 1989

Charles E. Caudill  
Administrator  
USDA/NASS  
Room 4117 South Building  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Caudill:

I am writing with regard to the need for additional statistical data on aquaculture commodities grown in the United States. I am very sorry that I cannot appear at the March 9 meeting in Portland, but hope this letter will assist in your deliberations.

I have just returned from a World Aquaculture Society meeting in Los Angeles, California. During that meeting (attended by nearly 3,000 delegates from many countries) I chaired a session on the needs of U.S. states in their efforts to promote aquaculture in this country. Scientific data, more local education, a streamlined permit process, and better production statistics, were the primary needs agreed upon by those in attendance. Another major theme was increased support from the Federal Government and the USDA. I believe that the expressed need for more USDA support and better statistics, could be met by an expanded effort to incorporate additional species produced from aquatic farming.

As you know, only trout and catfish are presently surveyed by your department, but there are numerous shellfish and finfish species that are being grown and marketed without any clear idea as to the magnitude of that effort. Oysters, clams, mussels, and salmon are four important species in Washington State that are not being accounted for by the USDA. I know there are many additional species produced under a variety of aquatic conditions throughout the land that should also be tabulated.

I have enclosed a copy of data collected by the Washington Department of Fisheries for aquaculture products. Our state is a major oyster producing state, with nearly 25 percent of the nation's domestic production. We have a need and an opportunity to expand, since the U.S. imports more oysters than we currently

Charles E. Caudill  
February 28, 1989  
Page 2

produce. National and regional statistics would be of great benefit in approaching state and federal decision makers in order to obtain assistance in efforts to increase U.S. production of fresh and marine culture commodities.

I would like to share my thoughts and perceptions on this issue with you or one of your staff. If you wish, I could send the list of other state aquaculture personnel who attended the meeting in Los Angeles.

Please feel free to call me at (206) 586-2777.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John L. Pitts".

John L. Pitts  
Aquaculture Coordinator

JLP:jk

Enclosures

cc: Doug Hasslen



# Aquaculture Production, Washington, 1985-87

Species	Quantity			Ex-Vessel Value		
	1985	1986	1987	1985	1986	1987
<b>Fish</b>	<b>Pounds</b>			<b>Dollars</b>		
Salmon						
Market	3,804,655	2,532,367	3,362,354	4,579,053	3,738,323	5,001,141
Juvenile	160	N/A	6,198	10,240	N/A	25,442
Egg	N/A	15,769	10,537	N/A	434,867	311,740
Trout						
Market	665,297	327,391	259,532	1,330,594	593,301	554,638
Juvenile	7,990	63,211	74,180	199,750	140,918	194,370
Egg	50,168	49,814	61,402	1,404,704	1,506,712	1,889,412
Atlantic Salmon						
Market	N/A	17,811	248,223	N/A	67,413	1,175,984
Juvenile	880	7,542	28,008	56,320	265,444	553,355
Egg	418	N/A	1,612	50,160	N/A	263,271
Total Market	4,469,952	2,877,569	3,870,109	5,909,647	4,399,037	6,731,763
Total Juvenile	9,030	70,753	108,386	266,310	406,362	773,167
Total Egg	50,586	65,583	73,551	1,454,864	1,941,579	2,464,423
Total Fish	4,529,568	3,013,905	4,052,046	7,630,821	6,746,978	9,969,353
<b>Clams</b>						
Butter	22,357	70,370	14,096	7,428	12,007	5,880
Cockles	N/A	N/A	1,632	N/A	N/A	346
Geoducks	N/A	N/A	2,494	N/A	N/A	3,232
Horse	N/A	77,910	21,648	N/A	6,193	6,874
Littleneck	455,977	926,493	994,985	277,523	754,143	541,463
Manilla	2,855,655	3,696,211	3,159,187	1,541,895	3,459,931	2,472,100
Mussels	254,967	297,313	284,684	135,133	349,412	343,306
Softshell	405,314	422,846	191,780	155,511	140,356	102,063
Manila Clam Seed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50
Total Clams	3,994,270	5,491,143	4,670,506	2,117,490	4,722,042	3,475,314
<b>Oysters</b>						
Olympia	2,447	7,457	7,125	52,537	167,364	109,780
Pacific	5,979,989	8,638,877	9,352,384	6,398,588	10,993,283	10,253,870
Kumamoto	29,731	N/A	N/A	273,228	N/A	N/A
Edulis	1,219	5,412	N/A	20,625	52,033	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A	9,342	N/A	N/A	56,225
Total Oysters 1/	6,013,386	8,651,746	9,368,851	6,744,978	11,212,680	10,419,875
Oyster Seed (Bags)	N/A	28,655	28,329	N/A	301,922	363,291
Total Production 2/	14,537,224	17,156,794	18,091,403	16,493,289	22,983,622	24,227,833

1/ Quantity in gallon units.

2/ Total Production quantity does not include oyster seed.

N/A - Not Available

Source: Department of Fisheries, State of Washington

Washington is an important advantage in pursuing marketing opportunities (Table 3.1). Not only does the product diversity create an elaborate menu of offerings to the world's consumers, but it also reduces the state's dependence upon the economic fortunes of any single commodity. This diversity is made possible by the state's moderate climate and growing conditions, geographically distinct agricultural regions, the widespread development of irrigation systems, and a high level of management and entrepreneurial skills in this industry.

The diversity of Washington agriculture reveals a further balance in the makeup and importance of crops produced. Forty commodities accounted for 87 percent of the total farm value of production (\$3.06 billion) in 1986, and the top six (apples, milk, cattle and calves, wheat, potatoes, and hay) accounted for nearly two-thirds of farm marketings. The state's agriculture is represented by both large-scale production of bulk, homogeneous commodities, as well as an even larger selection of smaller, often specialized or high-valued commodities.

The major agricultural commodities in Washington share several similarities: 1) competitive, low-cost production; 2) a consistent, recognized, high-quality product; and 3) a significant, influential share of the market. Marketing strategies in these industries capitalize on these

strong points and may serve as useful guidelines for improving market performance of Washington's smaller-volume agriculture crops.

Competitiveness in world markets and trends in consumption suggest that the ability to differentiate or specialize individual agricultural products will be an important advantage in marketing, especially for enterprises seeking high-margin returns. On the other hand, large-scale, highly efficient, low-margin operations that produce bulk, homogeneous products will continue to be important providers of world food needs. Washington State has the product mix in agriculture to pursue both opportunities.

Depending upon the type or mix of commodities grown, differing marketing strategies will be appropriate. For Washington, the production expertise and marketing infrastructure already exist to support a diverse base of agricultural commodities and products. The opportunity in this case is to increase the focus on marketing activities—promotion, distribution, processing, and so forth—that are appropriate for specific demands. Specialized or limited “niche” markets may represent marketing opportunities overlooked by traditional bulk commodity sales. A single marketing strategy will likely be ineffective in straddling the extremes of bulk low-margin commodities and differentiated high-margin products. Thus, flexibility in

**Table 3.1. Principle Washington Agricultural Commodities, 1982-86**

Commodity	5-Year Average Value of Production
1. Wheat	\$497,274,000
2. Milk	466,061,000
3. Apples	353,185,000
4. Cattle & Calves	318,801,000
5. Potatoes	241,383,000
6. Hay	207,408,000
7. Barley	115,712,000
8. Nursery/Greenhouse	96,800,000
9. Hops	79,073,000
10. Corn, Grain	59,680,000
11. All Pears	59,657,000
12. Eggs	59,369,000
13. Sweet Cherries	46,043,000
14. Asparagus	37,562,000
15. Chickens	33,520,000
16. Grapes	28,841,000
17. Corn, Silage	27,836,000
18. Sweet Corn	26,611,000
19. Green Peas	23,294,000
20. Mint	21,758,000
21. Lentils	17,546,000
22. Onions	17,424,000
23. Dry Peas	16,911,000
24. Aquaculture	*16,075,000
25. Alfalfa Seed	12,332,000
26. Dry Beans	10,894,000
27. Bluegrass Seed	10,882,000
28. Carrots	10,155,000
29. Red Raspberries	9,473,000
30. Hogs	8,526,000
31. Peaches	7,522,000
32. Strawberries	6,949,000
33. Mink	6,867,000
34. Mushrooms	5,568,000
35. Cranberries	5,023,000
36. Oats	3,236,000
37. Sheep & Wool	2,976,000
38. Lettuce	2,949,000
39. Prunes	2,823,000
40. Wrinkled Peas	2,498,000

From data compiled by the Washington Agricultural Statistics Service

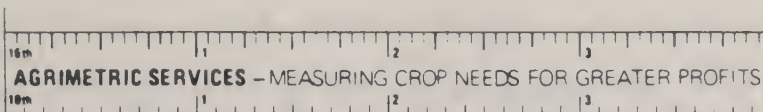
\*Washington State Department of Fisheries.

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March 6. 1989

Mr. Douglas A. Hasslen  
State Statistician  
Washington Agricultural Statistics Service  
P.O. Box 609  
Olympia, WA 98507

RE: Comments on USDA Economic and Statistics Reports

Dear Mr. Hasslen;

It now appears that I will be unable to attend your meeting in Portland on March 9, and thus I am taking this opportunity to pass a few comments along to you.

I am writing to you rather than to Mr. Caudill because the date is late and I am afraid he might not receive this letter before the meeting.

As a practicing agricultural economist engaged in the management of an agricultural consulting business, and also as a consultant who works regularly with fruit and vegetable growers, packers and processors, I think it is safe to say that I rely heavily on USDA's economics and statistics reports. This includes your annual Washington Agricultural Statistics. One of the main frustrations that I have as a user -- and this is not a criticism -- is that there are so many reports, that I am continually finding new ones with new information that I wish I had realized were available earlier. One of the things that I had hoped to be able to do in attending your meeting was just to become more familiar with what is really there. In general, however, I am impressed by what I find in these reports, and I rely on it extensively in conducting my business.

I live in the Yakima Valley, which you will recognize is an area that has many high valued specialty crops. I think that it is remarkable that these are covered as well as they are, considering the large number and relatively minor importance of many of them. But let me share a couple of my frustrations with you.

First, let's look at apples. Washington State produces more than half of the Nation's fresh apples and it produces three to four times as many apples as New York, which is second in apple production. Apples are a very important and growing export crop, and thus they have a special significance to our national economy. Nevertheless, most if not all of the apple statistics of which I am aware are reported for the State as a whole rather than by district



or county. Furthermore, there is very little differentiation according to variety. I think that this industry has grown to a level of importance which would justify its being reported for at least two if not four separate districts, and for perhaps five or more varieties. I recognize that Market News Service does already do some separate price reporting by varieties.

Another problem that we have with apple statistics is that the coverage of prices is somehow not very complete. Market News Service in Yakima reports f.o.b. prices for many sizes and grades of apples on a daily basis. However, there are no quantities attached to these prices, and therefore it is difficult at times to look at them and see where the market is really going or to look back at the end of the season and say where the market has actually been. At the same time, the Washington Agricultural Statistics Service does report monthly packing house door (phd) prices paid to farmers, but there is no way to relate these to the numerous fob prices being reported by size and grade. At the end of the season, a single season average phd price is determined, but it is impossible to determine a single f.o.b. price. (For the latter, we have to go to the local Growers Clearing House in Wenatchee, but they report only for the Northern district, which may well not be representative of the State as a whole.)

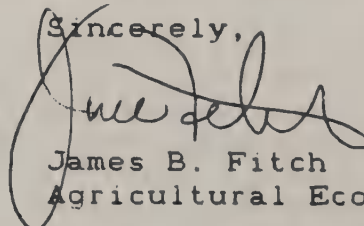
In my opinion, it is apples where we need to do more work, and especially on prices. However, some of the same statements could be made for pears and cherries, but not as much additional detail could be justified.

To my knowledge, we do not have much to go on when it comes to labor costs in Washington agriculture, and I think that we could use some help there. It would also be of use to have some state or regional indices developed for the cost of key agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and perhaps even pesticides. Or are we safe in assuming that National indices also apply at the State level?

Naturally, I recognize that everybody always asks for more statistics and nobody tells you what could be dropped. To this I would say while I think we need more reporting districts for apples in the State of Washington, I really cannot see the value of some of the county level statistics that are reported for grain crops. Eliminating these, however, would probably only result in minor savings.

Let me close by saying that I place a high value on your work and hope that these few comments will be of some assistance to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James B. Fitch", written over the typed name.

James B. Fitch  
Agricultural Economist



# POTATO COMMITTEE

March 6, 1989

Charles E. Caudill, Administrator  
USDA  
National Agricultural Statistics Service  
14th & Independence Avenue SW Room 4117-S  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Caudill:

This letter is to present the current position of the Oregon-California Potato Committee on statistical compilations that affect our industry, particularly stocks on hand and acreage reports.

In our annual meeting last year the Oregon-California Potato Committee passed a motion that asks for acreage figures to be segregated as to committed or uncommitted acres. The purpose of this would be to have acreage planted in potatoes divided, so that there would be a figure for those potatoes that will be on the open market and another figure for those potatoes which are already committed to sale (such as to a processor) and will not affect the open market.

Additionally, our Marketing Order Committee supports a motion on the books of the National Potato Council. This motion stipulates that the National Potato Council will work with your organization to determine stocks on hand reports and divide potato stocks into usable and unusable quantities. The Washington Potato Commission has passed a similar motion by dividing the potatoes into usable and unusable quantities. The stocks on hand report would more accurately depict those potatoes which will enter the market.

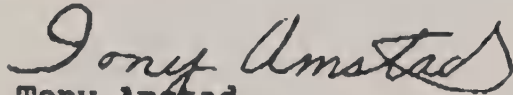
Finally, I would like to add that our committee has an additional suggestion concerning the stocks on hand report. We feel that, just as in the acreage report, the stocks on hand report should depict those potatoes that are committed to sale and also those potatoes which are uncommitted. In other words, potatoes in storage which are already contracted and will thereby not affect the open market should be listed separately from uncommitted stocks on hand.

Charles E. Caudill

Page 2

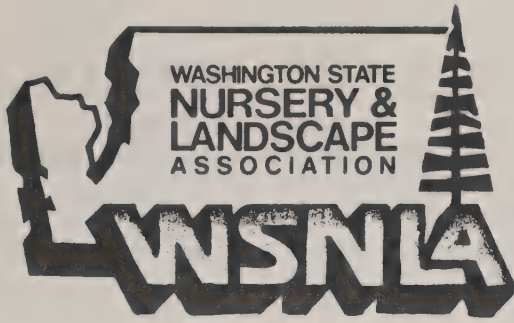
Hopefully this letter helps clarify the position our committee has on proposed changes in acreage and stocks on hand reporting. We will continue to work with our neighboring states and also with the National Potato Council to move towards common ground with these ideas. In the meantime, if you have any questions on this matter, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tony Amstad". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Tony Amstad  
Chairman





March 6, 1989

Charles E. Caudill, Administrator  
USDA/NASS  
Room 4117 South Building  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Caudill:

According to the 1987-88 edition of 'Washington Agricultural Statistics', nursery and greenhouse products are the seventh ranked agricultural commodity in Washington State. In spite of the obvious importance of these products, the publication contains virtually no other data on nursery and greenhouse products, other than the floriculture information on pages 23 and 24.

We're impressed with 'Washington Agricultural Statistics' and the data it contains on commodities, many of which are apparently of less economic value than nursery and greenhouse products.

Is there a way to include nursery and greenhouse products in the comprehensive statistics in future editions?

I've discussed this matter with State Statistician Douglas Hasslen, and he has extended an invitation to the March 9 "Data Users Meeting". However, not being a current user of the data, I found that I would have nothing to offer during most of the discussions listed on the agenda. My only input would have been a request for future inclusion in the reports, which I've now expressed in this letter.

I hope the meeting will go well, and that the Washington State Nursery & Landscape Association will be able to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Steve McGonigal  
Executive Director

cc: Douglas A. Hasslen, State Statistician  
WSNLA Board of Directors



**SOUTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

1835 Assembly St. - P.O. Box 1911  
Columbia, South Carolina 29202  
Telephone (803) 765-5333

March 6, 1989

Mr. Lemuel Dillard  
S.C. Farm Bureau  
504 Buncombe Road  
Greer, SC 29651

Dear Mr. Dillard:

I was delighted to hear from Tom Warren that you will be able to attend our Data Users Meeting in Washington, D.C. on March 16. Enclosed is a tentative agenda which I just received from our headquarters office in Washington. The meeting will be held in the Administration Building, which is located at 12th & Jefferson Drive, SW. As you are probably aware, this is just across Independence Avenue from the South Agriculture Building.

I was also informed that you are welcome to make a presentation during the public forum part of the program. If you have any problems or questions while in Washington, I suggest you contact either the office of Mr. Don Bay at 447-3896 or Mr. Rich Allen at 447-4333.

I hope that you have a very pleasant trip. I will not be attending the meeting, but please feel free to contact me at 765-5333 in Columbia if I can help you in anyway.

Sincerely,

Henry J. Power, Jr.  
State Statistician

c: Tom Warren, S.C. Farm Bureau  
(letter only) Rich Allen, NASS Headquarters  
(letter only) Don Bay, NASS Headquarters

Enclosure

**National  
Pecan  
Shellers Association**  
Suite 500-D, 5775 Peachtree-Dunwoody Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30342  
404-252-3663

March 8, 1989

Mr. Charles E. Caudill  
Administrator  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Caudill:

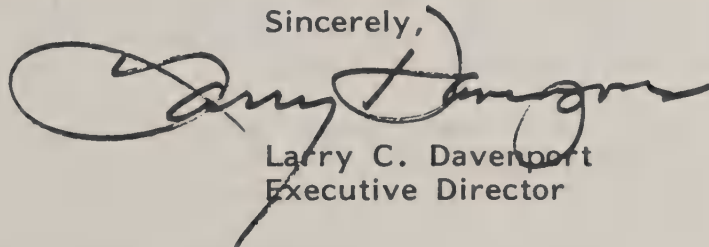
Thank you for the invitation to attend the March 16 meeting in Washington. Unfortunately, due to schedule conflicts, no one will be able to represent the association. We would appreciate receiving a summary of the proceedings, if possible.

We wanted you to be aware of the importance of the USDA National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS) to the pecan industry. Because pecans are an unregulated commodity, information on crop size and cold storage holdings is extremely important. The only statistical data available to the industry is through the USDA. The industry relies on it.

We appreciate the dedication of the NASS and the Economic Research Service to the accuracy and timeliness of the statistics they provide to the pecan industry.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Larry C. Davenport  
Executive Director

LCD/sd





## MICHIGAN BLUEBERRY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

---

P.O. Drawer B  
Grand Junction, Michigan 49056  
Telephone 616-434-6791  
Telefax 616-434-6997

---

March 13, 1989

Charles E. Caudill, Administrator  
USDA/NASS  
Room 4117 South Building  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Caudill:

Scheduling conflicts prevent me from attending your Lansing meeting. Please accept this letter as input regarding the blueberry industry.

The blueberry industry is growing rapidly in both production and demand. It has enjoyed relatively excellent economic health, thus attracting more potential producer attention.

Reliable information is important for well thought out industry planning and marketing strategies. The North American Blueberry Council (NABC) has organized statistical reports for 25 years. We believe they are reliable, but that USDA reports would add further reliability as well as be more complete in data collection.

The first priority is to fund a Michigan Blueberry Report. It is suggested that this include acreage by age and variety, production by fresh and process, and farm gate value.

The second priority will be the inclusion of other highbush and cultivated acres in the United States. The schedule enclosed provides the current view of NABC.

Also enclosed is a ten year schedule of U.S. blueberry production. This illustrates the recent growth. The U.S. is the largest producer in the world, and contributes to our exports.

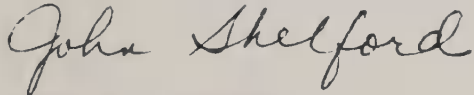
The farm gate value in Michigan in 1988 is estimated at \$40 million, and in 1987 at \$38 million. This is very good compared to other minor Michigan crops. As a matter of fact, Michigan's 1988 red tart cherry production of 161.5 million pounds has an estimated farm gate value of only \$30 to \$35 million.

*Marketing for your future.*

Blueberries are an important source of rural income to Michigan, and increasingly to the nation. It is now time to include blueberries in the USDA statistics.

Sincerely,

MICHIGAN BLUEBERRY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Shelford".

John Shelford  
General Manager

JS/b

encs.

cc: Don Fedewa  
Senator Harry Gast  
Representative Mick Middaugh  
Rod Cook

ESTIMATED BLUEBERRY ACREAGE FOR FOUR YEARS  
 John W. Nelson  
 Michigan Blueberry Growers Association, for  
 North American Blueberry Council

HIGHBUSH

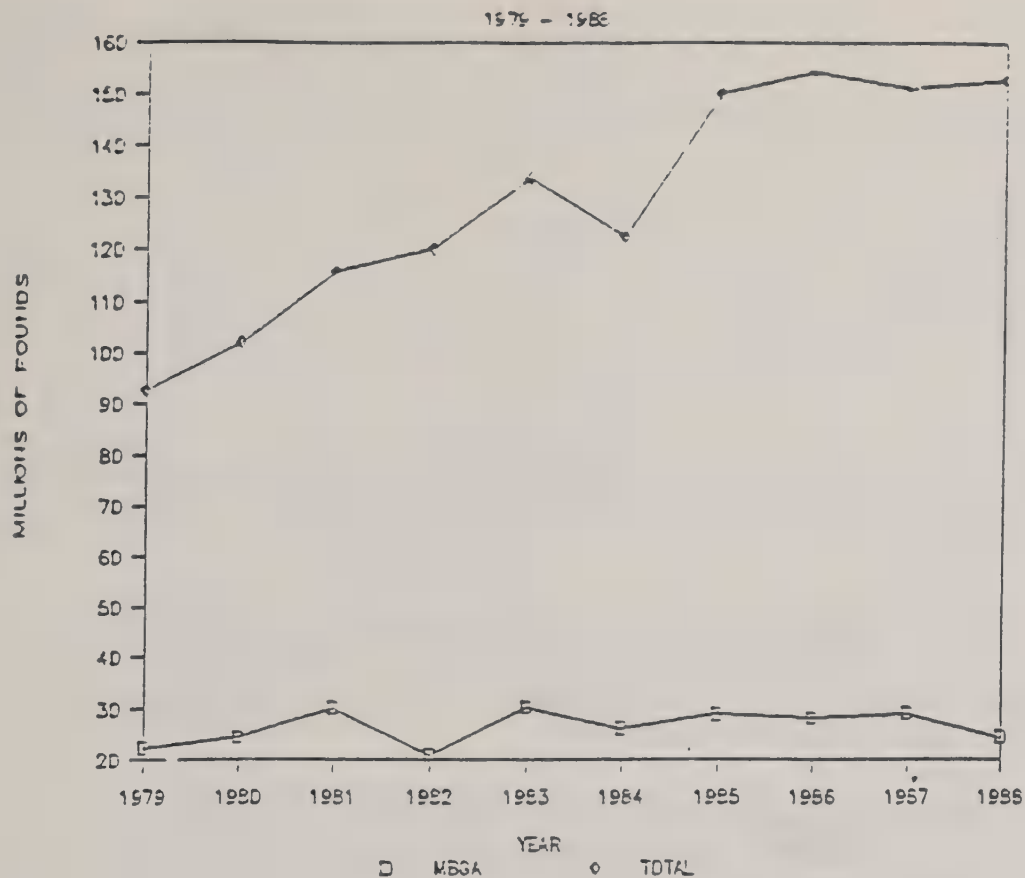
	<u>1976</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1989</u>
<u>NORTHWEST</u>				
Oregon	275	800	950	1,350
Washington	825	900	933	1,000
British Columbia	1,000	2,500	3,000	4,000
<u>MIDWEST</u>				
Michigan	9,700	12,000	15,000	16,000
IL-IN-OH	1,000	1,000	1,200	1,300
Minnesota	-	-	10	30
<u>NORTHEAST</u>				
RI-CN-NH-VT-MA	1,000	1,300	1,400	1,500
New York	-	600	1,600	1,800
Ontario	-	300	300	600
<u>ATLANTIC</u>				
New Jersey	7,700	8,000	9,600	8,000
Maryland	-	500	550	600
Virginia	-	100	150	200
North Carolina	4,200	4,000	4,000	3,900
South Carolina	-	200	200	200
<u>CENTRAL</u>				
Pennsylvania	-	500	600	650
Kentucky	-	100	150	150
AK-MO-OK	100	700	2,500	1,250
<u>SOUTHEAST</u>				
Florida	-	50	200	300
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,800</b>	<b>33,550</b>	<b>42,343</b>	<b>42,830</b>

RABBITEYE

Georgia	300	3,000	2,513	3,000
Florida	-	1,000	885	1,100
Mississippi	-	400	624	784
Texas	-	250	495	1,000
South Carolina	-	500	178	200
Alabama	-	200	254	350
North Carolina	-	-	156	175
Louisiana	-	200	125	207
Tennessee	-	-	79	80
Arkansas	-	-	25	75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>5,550</b>	<b>5,334*</b>	<b>6,971</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b><u>26,100</u></b>	<b><u>39,100</u></b>	<b><u>47,677</u></b>	<b><u>49,801</u></b>

\* Data Supplied by J.A. Payne, USDA-ARS, Byron, GA





U. S. BLUEBERRY PRODUCTION --- 1979 - 1988  
(000 POUNDS)

YEAR	MICHIGAN	NEW JERSEY	MAINE	N.C. CAROLINA	WASH/ORE	FLA. GEO. ARIZ.	TOTAL
1979	36,113	22,400	17,575	7,980	7,892		92,760
1980	41,000	26,000	21,190	8,970	8,100		105,260
1981	51,000	29,000	20,600	7,150	8,100		115,850
1982	41,400	30,000	31,925	3,075	9,155		120,555
1983	49,148	23,000	44,853	8,100	11,782		136,883
1984	46,666	29,000	24,684	9,400	8,253	4,000	122,303
1985	56,200	40,000	46,730	1,200	10,800	4,000	149,930
1986	57,000	40,000	40,169	8,300	7,600	4,000	154,269
1987	56,100	28,000	36,300	11,500	12,700	8,500	151,100
1988	42,000	26,000	47,000	15,000	15,900	8,900	152,800

TEN YEAR AVERAGE 1979 - 1988

47,163	29,340	35,123	7,248	10,037	5,080	129,589
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MOST RECENT FIVE YEAR AVERAGE 1984 - 1988

50,393	32,800	36,977	8,520	11,111	5,050	140,060
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March 27, 1989

Mr. John Shelford  
General Manager  
Michigan Blueberry Growers Association  
P.O. Drawer B  
Grand Junction, Michigan 49056

Dear Mr. Shelford:

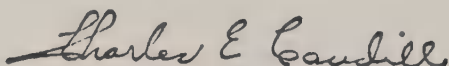
We had a good Data Users Meeting in Lansing with close to 50 producers and industry representatives attending. We regret that you could not attend but we do appreciate your suggestions regarding the blueberry industry contained in your letter to us.

In early 1982, as you may know, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) experienced a substantial reduction in both its budget and personnel. As a result, the Agency had no choice but to discontinue a number of its data series and curtail a number of others. Statistics on blueberries was one of the data series discontinued.

NASS has received numerous requests for reinstatement of many of the discontinued statistical series. However, its impossible for us to add any additional items to our current estimating program unless funds are provided by industry or some other outside source. Federal funds have been requested for estimation of these specialty crops through the regular budget process, each of the last several years, along with strong justification of the need for these data. However, our requests have not been approved and the present climate is not very promising.

We are fully aware that statistical data are needed for blueberries and many other specialty items not currently in our estimating program--this includes those items discontinued in early 1982 plus a number of other items that have grown in importance in recent years and have never been in our estimating program.

I appreciate your bringing this matter to my attention and regret that I can't be more encouraging at this time.



CHARLES E. CAUDILL  
Administrator

# De Bruyn Produce Co.

Onions Every Day From Everywhere

P.O. Box 76 Zeeland, MI 49464

616-772-2102 FAX 616-772-4242

March 15, 1989

Mr. Charles E. Caudill  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Caudill:

I am sorry that I was unable to attend the meeting held March 14th in Lansing, Michigan, and will be unable to attend the meeting in Washington tomorrow.

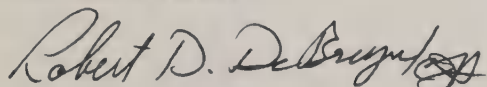
I do have some suggestions though. One is that it would be handy to dial into the history reports and pull past information. Another would be to have more graphs showing comparable shipments either current year or against last year.

Figures showing shipments from states should be only those items from that state and not include items imported from another state, repacked, and then shipped from the receiving state.

These are a few comments that may not have been covered in either meeting. I hope they will be helpful.

Sincerely,

DE BRUYN PRODUCE CO.



Robert D. DeBruyn  
President

---

Phone	Ontario, OR	Greeley, CO	Byron Center, MI	Marshall, MI	Farmersville, TX	Weslaco, TX
FAX	503-889-9663	303-356-4332	616-878-1534	616-781-4628	214-782-6133	512-968-6581
	503-889-9376	303-356-8116	616-772-2917		214-782-7791	512-968-1709



March 27, 1989

Mr. Robert D. DeBruyn  
President, DeBruyn Produce Company  
P.O. Box 76  
Zeeland, Michigan 49464

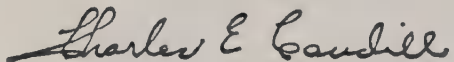
Dear Mr. DeBruyn:

This is in response to your letter of March 15 concerning the Data Users Meeting in Lansing. We regret you were unable to attend. Close to 50 producers and industry representatives came to the meeting and we had an active session.

Your suggestion that historical data be put in some form for easy access is timely. With the advent of the Personal Computer (PC), some organizations are already packaging large quantities of data on disks for distribution. Even though, the National Agricultural Statistics Service has no timetable for doing this, primarily due to resource constraints, we are hopeful that it will come about in the near future.

Your suggestion concerning use of graphics to show shipments data seems like a good one. All shipment data are compiled by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), so I am sending a copy of your letter to Mr. Winfred "Bill" Crocker, Chief of the Market News Branch in AMS.

I appreciate you taking the time to send me your suggestions.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles E. Caudill". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

CHARLES E. CAUDILL  
Administrator



## **MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU**

7373 West Saginaw Highway, Box 30960, Lansing, Michigan 48909-8460  
Phone (517) 323-7000

March 17, 1989

Mr. Richard Allen  
Deputy Administrator of Programs  
National Agricultural Statistics Service  
South Agriculture Building, Room 4133  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Allen:

This is a follow-up to your request on March 14, 1989, during the USDA Data Users Meeting held here in Lansing, Michigan to put in writing my comments and testimony. I am happy to do this and want to again thank you and everyone else with the National Agricultural Statistics Service for coming to Michigan and meeting with us on USDA data needs regarding specialty crops and farm labor.

As you know, I represent Michigan Farm Bureau which is the largest general farm organization in Michigan and we have nearly 100,000 member families, with 48,000 farm member families. Approximately one-third of Michigan's farm income comes from speciality crops, so they are very significant to our diverse agriculture.

Generally speaking we have an excellent relationship with both MASS and AMS' Market News here in Michigan and their respective's staff. Since my professional duties include a great deal of economic research and market analysis, my work as an agricultural economist is only as good as quality of the statistics provided, often by these two agencies.

The agricultural industry has developed many mechanisms for reporting the size and progress of crops and other agricultural commodities. The system that has been most widely adopted by the industry is the Agricultural Statistics Service. To ensure the accuracy of these reports, we encourage farmers to give the Agricultural Statistics Service full cooperation. Farm Bureau will continue to work with the Agricultural Statistics Service to find ways to improve and simplify the gathering of information, reporting and other aspects currently criticized by farmers.

We are concerned about the elimination of crop reports for several fruit, vegetable and specialty crops on a national basis. We feel that at least a post-harvest report should be reinstated for these crops. We also support the continuation of

Mr. Richard Allen  
Page 2  
March 17, 1989

survey reports for perennial crops including orchards, vineyards, brambles and asparagus.

We believe there is a need for an-ongoing, 3-year cycle on fruit orchard tree inventory and vineyard survey and a determination as to whose responsibility this is -- the state or federal government? Next, blueberry statistics are needed for both production and utilization. It seems that in 1982 when these reports were eliminated that resources were diverted away from specialty crops and used for the major crops.

Next, the need for more complete coverage in the vegetable area was again demonstrated following the 1988 drought where ASCS offices needed information on yields and prices for specialty crops to administer the federal Disaster Assistance Program for farmers and often there was no or little historical data available.

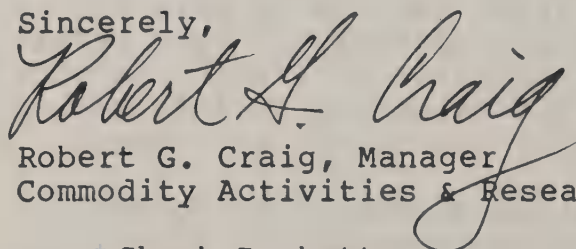
In a dried vegetable area, dry edible beans, the statistical reports and information available for Michigan are very good. Yet we're in a national, actually global market and other states that are major producers of navy beans (pea beans) don't provide comparable information by class and this puts Michigan at a competitive disadvantage. Therefore we request that the other dry bean-producing states, particularly North Dakota and Minnesota, provide statistical reports comparable to those here in Michigan.

In other areas, we recommend an equine survey be included during the regular agricultural survey.

Finally, we recommend the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Michigan Department of Agriculture adequately fund their full portion of this cost-share service. We are most concerned with the decline in state and national funding for this valuable service. Accurate and timely statistics are essential to further develop Michigan agriculture and find new markets as well as attract new processing facilities.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment on behalf of Michigan Farm Bureau. I look forward to the agency's response.

Sincerely,



Robert G. Craig, Manager  
Commodity Activities & Research Department

cc: Chuck Burkett  
Noel Stuckman  
Al Almy  
Don Fedewa





March 20, 1989

Mr. Charles E. Caudill  
Administrator  
USDA/NASS  
Room 4117, South Building  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Charles:

I regret that I was not able to attend March 16th meeting, but I welcome the opportunity to offer the following comments concerning USDA's economics and statistics reporting:

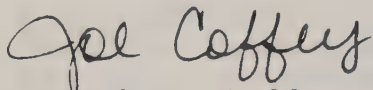
- \* We are an intense user of USDA statistics, especially for major crops and livestock at the county level. Of course, we would like to have the statistics as soon as possible in an electronic format suitable for a LOTUS 1-2-3 spreadsheet. ERS and the Ag Census release diskettes but I sense a reluctance by NASS to do so. I would urge you to consider a policy of making data available on diskette, both on a national basis and from the state offices.
- \* There remain consistencies among data published by NASS, ERS, and Census. I would urge that a "cross walk" be developed such that one quickly could see the reasons for the differences in the estimates. The explanation of these variances should be included in each of the respective publications. This would help the user considerably and minimize confusion. I have in mind feed and fertilizer data which vary considerably.
- \* Disclosure is becoming an increasing problem in county data. Since layers and broilers are concentrated in a few large units, county data are becoming less and less usable. Yet county data are important for many purposes both for agri-business and of the public. There is also a related problem. When data are not included in a county, the county totals do not add to state total. This also causes some confusion.

Mr. Charles E. Caudill  
March 20, 1989  
Page 2

\* I would assume that you will be updating county data in light of the new Census of Agriculture. It would be helpful to me to know what your plans are in this regard and when you would expect these revisions to be released.

My comments may appear to be critical, but I do not wish to leave the impression that I do not find the NASS and other agricultural data useful. Indeed, we use them quite intensively and have spent thousands of dollars typing them into the computer and checking them for completeness and consistency. I am a strong supporter of the publication of agricultural statistics. I always encourage farmers and our management to cooperate with the statistical agencies in supplying information on a timely and accurate basis. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joe Coffey".

Joseph D. Coffey, Vice President  
Economics and Planning  
SOUTHERN STATES COOPERATIVE, INC.

JDC/tw

April 17, 1989

Mr. Joseph D. Coffey  
Vice President  
Southern States Cooperative, Inc.  
6606 West Broad Street  
P.O. Box 26234  
Richmond, Virginia 23260

Dear Mr. Coffey:

Thank you for your suggestions concerning USDA's economics and statistics reporting. The only reluctance NASS has to releasing data on diskettes is associated with lack of resources. An increasing workload with a 20 percent reduction in staff has made it very difficult to improve data dissemination activities. However, we are making some progress in this area. Currently, the livestock data are available on diskettes at the county, State, and national level. We are working on the crop data, which has much larger files than livestock. These data should be available on diskettes in late 1989. These files will be suitable for use in LOTUS 1-2-3 and several other spreadsheet packages. All diskettes will be available through the Agricultural Statistics Board.

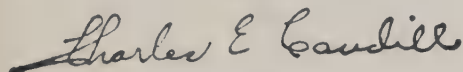
NASS and ERS work closely with the Census of Agriculture in developing policies and procedures to be used in conducting agricultural surveys. NASS provides a staff member who works with the Agricultural Division of the Bureau of the Census to facilitate communications on a wide variety of issues. However, I am not sure that the variations you mention in feed and fertilizer data are in the NASS area. Explanations of procedural or definitional differences are carried in NASS historical publications which follow the Census periods.

Your point on disclosures relative to county data is certainly valid. As larger units, whether by expansion or acquisition, become more dominant in a commodity, the disclosure issue becomes more restrictive. Whenever possible, we obtain the written permission of individuals or companies involved to publish the data at the county level. In the event we are unable to secure the permission of those involved, we must then combine the data with another county or show a grouping of other counties. In any event, the total of all counties should equal the State estimate.

County data will be updated in light of the new Census of Agriculture data. Timing of this activity has not been set, but I expect the update will be completed by the time the regular 1989 county estimates are prepared in April/May 1990.

I always welcome input from our data users. The support and suggestions from people like yourself greatly assist NASS in keeping abreast of changes in agriculture and the community it serves.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles E. Caudill". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

CHARLES E. CAUDILL  
Administrator



## **Riley Orchards Processing, Inc.**

5313 W. Taylor Road - Box 13  
MEARS, MICHIGAN 49436-9704

3/24/89

Mr. Charles Claudill, Adm.  
National Agricultural Statistics Service.  
South Office Bldg.  
USDA  
WASH. D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Claudill,

As A cherry grower-processor I feel the separation of RSP cherries and Tart Juice cherries in the Cold Storage Reports would provide us with better, more accurate information for making good marketing decisions.

Thank-you for your attention in regards to this situation.

Respectfully,  
Daniel J. Riley



# INTERNATIONAL APPLE INSTITUTE

6707 OLD DOMINION DRIVE, SUITE 210, POST OFFICE BOX 1137  
McLEAN, VA 22101 (703) 442-8850

March 27, 1989

Mr. Charles E. Caudill  
Administrator  
National Agricultural  
Statistics Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Caudill:

I regret being unable to attend the March 16 session regarding USDA's economics and statistics reports. Unfortunately the apple industry has been emerged in an agricultural chemical issue which has taken 100 percent of our time during most of March.

We are most interested in the USDA's reports which are used extensively by the IAI. So please contact us anytime we can be of assistance. I hope you will keep us on the list to participate in future meetings.

Sincerely,

Derl I. Derr  
President

Western New York

# Apple Growers

Association, Inc.



7645 MAIN STREET • P.O. BOX 350 • FISHERS, N.Y. 14453 • 716/924-2171 • FAX: 716/924-1629

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March 27, 1989

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Mr. Charles E. Caudill, Administrator  
United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Charles:

Just a quick note to express my regret in not being able to attend the recent meeting held in Syracuse on March 15. I intended to attend the meeting and take an active part in the day-long event. However, that particular date was at the height of the problem our industry was facing regarding Alar and as a result it was impossible for me to get away from the office. I very much regret missing this because there were several parts of the program in which I was very interested in learning more about.

I will be checking with Mr. Schooly to find out what I missed. If future meetings such as this are held, please let us know.

Again, I apologize for having had to miss the Syracuse meeting.

Sincerely,

Kenneth E. Pollard  
Executive Vice President

KEP:rg

cc: Robert Schooly



April 17, 1989

Mr. Kenneth E. Pollard  
Executive Vice President  
Apple Growers Association, Inc.  
P.O. Box 350  
Fishers, New York 14453

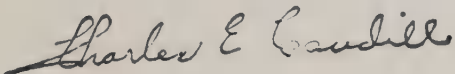
Dear Mr. Pollard:

I appreciate your letter expressing regrets for not being available to attend our Data Users meeting in Syracuse.

This was the first time our Agency, the National Agricultural Statistics Service, had a series of Data Users meetings on Specialty Commodities. We had a total of six meetings -- the others being in Orlando, Sacramento, Portland, Lansing, and Washington, D.C. Attendance was good and we felt it was beneficial, particularly for us to learn more about the concerns of our data users. A copy of the proceedings will be sent to you as soon as they are available.

I'm sure Bob Schooley will be glad to give you an update on the Syracuse meeting. Again, thanks for your letter and I hope the Alar situation gets resolved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles E. Caudill". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

CHARLES E. CAUDILL  
Administrator

# Payson Fruit Growers Inc.



March 27, 1989

Mr. Charles Caudill, Adm.  
National Agricultural Statistics Service  
South Office Building  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Caudill:

As a cherry processor and also a frozen food warehouseman expected to fill out the monthly Cold Storage Reports I have a concern over one aspect of the report.

Under the heading Frozen Fruits there are no reporting provisions provided for the juice stock that is being held in storage. Juice stock is not used for the primary dessert market in our markets and so the excess tonnage reported gives an inaccurate figure in the national inventory.

These few million pounds of juice stock can make a dessert market softer than it ought to be.

Excess inventory figures, for any reason, makes planning and good sound business decisions very difficult.

It is at all possible please separate these two categories for the best interest of the cherry industry.

Sincerely,

*Claude A. Rowley*  
Claude A. Rowley, Manager  
Payson Fruit Growers

MICHIGAN RED TART CHERRY INFORMATION PROGRAM  
Michigan Red Tart Cherry Advisory Board  
P.O. Box 23218  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

March 21, 1989

Mr. Charles Caudill  
National Agricultural Statistics Service  
South Office Building  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D. C. 20250

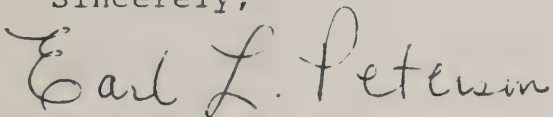
Dear Mr. Caudill:

On March 7, a meeting of tart cherry processors from across the nation was held in Grand Rapids, Michigan. After lengthy discussion, it was decided that our industry needs to have a change made in how tart cherries are reported in the Monthly Cold Storage Report. Currently both Tart (RSP) cherries and juice cherries are included in the same category. To have a better understanding of our industry's true inventory position, we need two separate categories. They would be:

Cherries, Tart (RSP), and  
Cherries, Tart Juice

We would appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Earl L. Peterson  
Chairman

cc: Don Fedewa, Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service  
Rick Olson, MACMA  
Vern Highley, Cherry Industry Consultant



April 12, 1989

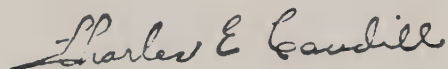
Mr. Claude A. Rowley  
Manager, Payson Fruit Growers  
P.O. Box 187  
Payson, UT 84651

Dear Mr. Rowley:

This is in response to your letter requesting a change in the estimates of tart cherries in cold storage. Separate estimates for Cherries, Tart (RSP) and Cherries, Tart Juice might be added if other cold storage facilities indicate they can provide the breakdown.

We will contact several other cold storage facilities that store tart cherries before making a final decision. Thank you for your interest in making the Cold Storage report more useful to the Tart Cherry industry.

Sincerely,



CHARLES E. CAUDILL  
Administrator

Identical letter sent to:

CC-136 Mr. Earl L. Peterson  
Chairman, Michigan Red Tart  
Cherry Advisory Board  
P.O. Box 23218  
Lansing, Mi 48909

CC-145 Mr. Daniel Riley  
Riley Orchards Processing, Inc.  
5313 W. Taylor Rd. Box 13  
Mears, ME 49436-9704







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